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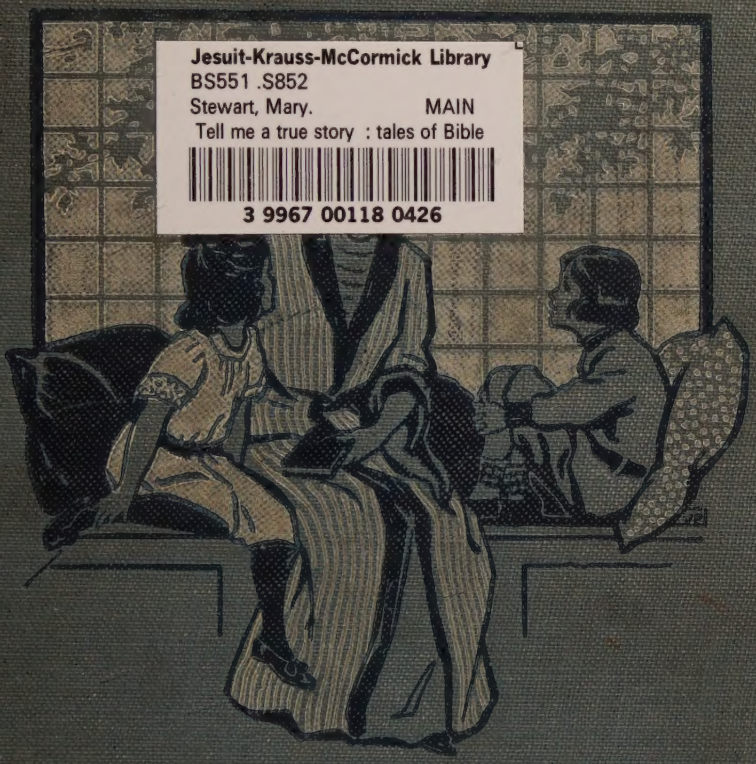

TELL ME A TRUE STORY

By

MARY STEWART

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By

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"TELL ME A TRUE STORY"

"Tell Me a True Story"

Tales of Bible Heroes for The Children of To-day

Arranged by
MARY STEWART

With an Introduction by
A. F. SCHAUFFLER, D. D.

ILLUSTRATED

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To

the boys and girls

of

Christ Church Sunday-School

New York City

INTRODUCTION

EVERY one loves brilliant work, and that is just what Miss Stewart has given all lovers of children, in this book.

The manner of telling these Bible stories has been the result of much personal experience on the part of Miss Stewart, for she is a most successful teacher of the little ones, and knows just how to reach their active minds.

All capable teachers agree that the rising generation knows all too little of the grand stories of the Old Book, and that no other book or books in the world can match the Bible for pictorial presentation of such truths as attract and fascinate the child's mind, while at the same time they arouse enthusiasm and lead the child to right action.

The time of all times in which to store the mind with stirring narratives is early childhood. Children dearly love Bible stories, and these can be made more attractive than the most popular fairy stories, on account of

their intrinsic merit, and because they are "true." For after all, the child, while it loves the fairy tale, loves the "true" story still better. "Tell me a true story," is the plea often heard by those who deal much with children. Why then should not this desire be met with those best of all stories, that we find in the Word of God?

These biblical narratives carry with them their own practical lessons. How better could sisterly fidelity be taught than by the charming story of Miriam and the baby Moses? What better foundation could be laid for the teaching of unswerving loyalty to duty than that found in the story of Joseph? Teachers of children in the Sunday-school, or the children's meeting, as well as mothers in the home, may well use this wonderful method of fascinating, and at the same time teaching, the little ones committed to their care.

Of course there is much in the "way" in which a story is told. Great is the art of the story-teller. In this book the gifted authoress has given fine examples of how a story may be made most interesting to children in Sunday-school or in the home. All who rightly

use this book will learn almost unconsciously how to tell stories in such a way as to charm the little ones who so dearly love the story, and who through it can learn much that it would be most difficult to teach them in any other way.

Most heartily do we commend this book, then, to all who are trying to make Bible narratives and characters real to the children under their care.

A. F. SCHAUFFLER.

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I

The Garden of Eden

Genesis 1 : 1–5 ; 2 : 4 to end

WHEN do you go to sleep? When it gets dark and night is coming, do you not?

And when do you get up? When the light comes and it is morning.

Once upon a time there was no daytime, It was all night. Do you wonder how the people knew when it was time to go to bed and when to get up?

There were no people on the earth to go to bed or to get up. The world was a great, dark, dreary place with no people, nor animals, nor even grass upon it. There was no sun to shine by day, nor moon and stars by night.

But although there were no people living on the earth there was always one person in heaven. Do you know who? God.

God looked down upon the poor, dark

earth and said, "Let there be light." And there was light. And God called the light day, and the darkness night. And that was the first day in the world. After that God made the sun and the moon and stars, and set them in the sky to give light.

In the earth there were many tiny seeds of all the trees, and bushes, and flowers. But they could not spring up, because the ground was hard and dry, for no man had ever plowed it and no rain had ever fallen.

So God caused a soft, gray mist to come up from the earth, to water all the ground and make it soft, and the seeds sent up little shoots, which grew tall and green.

Then God took some dust of the ground and out of it He made a man. He breathed the breath of life into him and he became a living soul. God has breathed the breath of life into every one of us, and that is why we are living souls.

God wanted this first man to be happy. So He planted a garden eastward, in Eden, and there He put Adam, the man whom He had made. It was a very beautiful garden. There were soft green grass and bright

flowers, and a river running through it to water it and keep it fresh. Every tree which is pleasant to look at and bears good fruit was planted in it. Among them there was one called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It must have been a lovely place, and for a time Adam was very happy, eating the fruit, and watering and gathering the flowers. But soon he grew lonely; he wanted something alive to talk to, a dog, or a kitten, or even a little bird. So out of the dust of the ground God made animals, every beast of the fields and every bird which flies in the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. Let us think of all the animals we can; then we shall know what names Adam gave to them in the Garden of Eden.

The animals must have been fun to play with, but shouldn't you have wanted also some one who could talk to you? You would have longed for a boy, or a girl and that was the way Adam felt. There was not a real helpmeet, or playmate, for him among all the animals. God had

said, "It is not good that man should be alone. I will make a helpmeet for him," and He caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and while he slept He took a bone out of his side, a rib. Out of that rib God made a lovely woman and brought her to Adam.

When he woke and saw her standing before him he was very glad. "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," he said; "she shall be called woman." He gave her another name too, Eve, and they lived together very happily in the garden of Eden, tending the flowers, caring for the animals and loving each other as they loved their Father God.

II

Forbidden Fruit

Genesis 3

DO you remember about the beautiful garden where Adam and Eve lived? You know how happy they were, taking care of the flowers and playing with the animals. Every evening, when the sun had set and it began to grow dark and cool, God came to the garden and walked and talked with them. How they must have watched for Him, as children watch for their father to come home in the evening. That was the best part of the day. They ran to meet Him and told Him about all the things they had been doing, about the different flowers and trees and animals. It must have been very wonderful to see God and to hear Him speak, and how dearly they must have loved Him.

There were many fruit trees in that garden, and God had told Adam and Eve they might

eat of the fruit of all the trees, except one. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil He had told them not to eat, so as to teach them to obey.

Well, one day Eve was walking in the garden, tending the flowers and plants, and talking to the animals. At last, in the middle of the garden, she came to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In front of it was a snake, and the snake said to Eve, "Has God indeed said that you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?"

Eve answered, "We may eat the fruit of every tree, except the tree which is in the middle of the garden, and God has said if we eat of that one, or even touch it, we shall die."

The snake told her that this was not true. "Ye shall not die," it said. Then Eve looked at the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and when she saw how pretty it was and that it looked good to eat, she picked some and ate it. The rest she gave to Adam and he ate it too.

Very soon the sun set and it began to grow cool and fragrant in the garden. That

was the time God came to see them, and they were always watching for Him, but this day, after they had eaten the forbidden fruit, they were afraid, and when they heard God walking in the garden they hid among the trees.

God called to Adam: "Where art thou?"

And Adam and Eve came out of their hiding place and Adam said, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, and I hid myself." That was a strange thing for a son to say to his Heavenly Father, that he was afraid when he heard Him coming, and hid. Why was he afraid? Because he had done wrong.

Then God asked him if he had eaten the fruit of the tree He had told him not to touch, and Adam said, "Eve gave me the fruit and I did eat."

God turned to Eve saying, "What hast thou done?"

Eve answered, "The snake tempted me, and I did eat."

So God punished the snake. He made him crawl, always flat on the ground, because he had tempted Eve. But Adam and Eve He had to punish most; He sent them

out of the beautiful garden where He had walked and talked with them; and at the gate of the garden He placed an angel with a flaming sword in his hand which turned every way, so that no one could come again into that beautiful place.

Outside of the garden the ground was rough and stony, and there were no lovely flowers; only thistles and thorns. Adam and Eve had to work hard, very hard, to make anything grow, and they were sometimes sick and sad. But God loved them always, even though they had done wrong. He punished them only to make them good. Before they left the garden He gave them coats of fur to keep them warm; and when they were truly sorry for what they had done, I am sure He came to them again and walked with them in the new garden which they had toiled so hard to make.

EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN

III

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4: 1–16

WHEN we love people very much, we often give them presents. I am going to tell you about two boys who brought presents to God. One was a farmer, who had a garden and raised fruit and vegetables, and the other was a shepherd, who took care of sheep and goats. The shepherd's name was Abel and the farmer's name was Cain. Each brought a present to God of what he had. Abel brought some of his little lambs, and Cain brought some fruit. Abel brought his gift gladly; he was manly and honest and good. I think he loved giving a present to God, and his face was bright and joyful as he came with the lambs in his arms. But Cain's face was cross. He was not good, and I do not believe he took nice care of his garden. I think he let the weeds grow there, and he did not give his fruit at all gladly

to God. So God was pleased with Abel and his lambs, but He was displeased with Cain, and the present he gave so unwillingly. That made Cain very angry; he had not looked happy before, but now he went about sullenly, with a long face and a hanging head.

Then God spoke to him. He was Cain's Heavenly Father as much as Abel's, and He wanted him to be good. "Why art thou angry," He said, "and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? But if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door, crouching, ready to spring, but thou shouldst rule over him."

God meant that sin was lying like a baby lion at the door of Cain's heart. If Cain chose he could tame the lion before it grew big and strong, and teach it to obey him; but if he did not do it at once, the lion of sin would grow strong and fierce, and would make him sinful, too.

Then Cain asked Abel to go into the field with him, and Abel was glad to go, thinking Cain was willing to be friendly again. But no; while they were walking together in the field Cain turned and killed his brother

That crouching lion had grown strong and had got the better of him.

Now God spoke to Cain again, but in a different way. Before, He had spoken lovingly and sorrowfully, trying to make him good, but now His voice was very stern.

"Cain," He said, "where is Abel, thy brother?"

Cain answered, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?"

God said, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground. And now thou must leave thy home, and mother and father, and go into strange lands. All thy life thou shalt be a wanderer, hiding and fleeing over the face of the earth."

That frightened Cain; wicked as he was he did not want to leave his home and family, and he was afraid some one would kill him for having killed his brother. "My punishment is greater than I can bear," he said. "Behold Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid, and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

So God, who was still the Heavenly Father of this man, gave him a sign by which he should know that He was watching over him and would not let any one kill him. We do not know what the sign was; perhaps it was a star in the sky, perhaps it was a mark on Cain's hand, something he could look at when he was far away to remind him that God was still watching him.

So Cain went away, and built a city, and lived all the rest of his life away from his father and mother, a lonely and unhappy man.

IV

Story of the Flood

Genesis 6, 7, 8

ONE of the toys that we love best is the Noah's Ark. Should you like to hear a story about the first Noah's Ark that was ever made?

It was very, very big, bigger than a house, and all the people and animals in it were alive. This is how it happened to be made.

Once upon a time, longer years ago than it is easy to count, there were many wicked people in the world. They did so many bad things that God had to punish them. But among them there was one man whose name was Noah, who was so good that the Bible says, "He walked with God." He had a wife and three sons, and God told him that, although all the bad people must be punished, He would save him and his family.

Then He told him to do a strange thing, to build an ark like your Noah's Ark, only

very big, with three stories in it, and one window high up, and a door in the side. God told him that when it was finished, he should take two of every kind of animal, and go in himself with his family, and shut the door. Then He would send a great long rain, a flood, and all the bad people would be drowned, but Noah and his family and the animals in the ark would be saved. You see the ark was half a house, and half a boat, so that it would float in the water. It must have seemed strange to Noah to build that big boat on the dry land, while the sky was bright and there was no sign of rain. But Noah trusted and obeyed God, and it was well for him and those animals that he did, for listen to what happened.

When the ark was finished, Noah called together two of every kind of animal. What lots of them there must have been! Two by two they marched into the ark, and behind them came Noah and his wife, and his sons and their wives. The door was shut, and a pattering sound was heard on the roof. What do you think it was? Rain; gentle summer rain at first, then it fell more heavily,

until soon so much water had fallen that the ground was covered, and the ark began to float. Then it started to rock and toss like a ship at sea, for the wind blew, the rain fell in torrents, the little brooks and lakes overflowed, and the flood had come.

The Bible says, "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Even the mountain tops were covered, and so of course all the houses were washed away, and the bad people were drowned. But inside the ark, Noah and his family and the animals were safe.

God was watching them, and after the rain had fallen for a long time God "made a wind to pass over the earth, and the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven ceased." Then suddenly the ark stopped rocking, and stood still. What do you suppose had happened? The water had been getting lower and lower, until the top of one of the mountains was seen, and on that mountain the ark rested. Do you remember what there was high up in the ark? A

window. When the ark stopped rocking and Noah knew that the rain was over, he opened that window and out of it he let fly a raven. The raven did not find any ground to light upon, but it did not come back, it just flew to and fro till the waters were dried up from off the earth. Then Noah sent out a dove. Doves cannot fly as long as ravens can, and Noah knew that if the dove did not find anywhere to rest, she would come back and he would know that the waters still covered the earth. "The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot," so she flew back to the ark, and Noah put out his hand and brought her in.

After seven days he sent her out again; all day she flew about and came back in the evening, and in her beak was a little green leaf, an olive leaf.

So Noah knew that the waters were getting lower, and that the tops of the trees must be above it.

For seven days more he waited, and then, when he sent the dove out, she did not come back, and he knew that she had found land on which to rest. Then God spoke again to

Noah. He told him to leave the ark, taking his wife, and sons, and their wives, and all the animals with him, and to build nice homes again on the land. So Noah opened the door and they all came out. How glad they must have been to be in the fresh air again, with bright skies over them and ground beneath their feet!

I do not believe the land was very dry at first; there must have been big puddles, and muddy places. But the grass and trees looked very green and fresh, and everything smelt nice and earthy, the way it does after a thunder-storm.

But there was something for Noah and his family to see which was more beautiful than shining sun, or green grass, or bright flowers.

In the sky facing them there was a wonderful rainbow. Have you ever seen a rainbow? You know how it makes a great arch in the sky. Every colour is in it, each melting into another, and when you see it you are happy, and your heart leaps up.

That is the way Noah felt too, and all his family. For as they looked with wonder at that beautiful arch, God spoke to them. He

told them that He would never send another flood, that He would always watch over and take care of them, and all the people who lived after them; that every time they looked at the rainbow they must remember that He was looking at it too, and that He had promised to take care of them.

That promise is to us also. I hope that we shall have a rainbow very soon to remind us of the promise, and whenever we see the rainbow we must think of this story, and remember that the rainbow stands for God's promise to take care of us.

V

The Story of Abraham

Gen. 12 : 1–5; 13; 14; 15 : 1; 21 : 1–8; Matt. 11 : 1

ONCE in a far country many years ago there were some men who lived in tents instead of houses. The oldest of them was named Abraham and he had taken a long journey across a desert, pitching his tent every night on the sand under the stars, and during the day riding upon a camel. Abraham's wife was with him and his young nephew Lot and many servants, all riding upon camels. At last the desert was crossed and Abraham and his company saw before them green grass and little streams and mountains covered with woods. Oh, how glad they must have been to leave the hot, flat stretches of sand and pitch their tents on soft grass with the trees rustling over their heads! For many days they journeyed over that beautiful country,

pitching their tents in different places, and often Abraham would build in front of the tent a little altar, like a table made of stones. There he would kneel and pray to God. I think that Sarah also prayed, but Lot, the young nephew who came with them you remember, was different from his uncle and aunt and I do not believe he prayed at all. He was mean and selfish and we cannot be like that if we pray every day with all our hearts. I am going to tell you a story about him and when it is finished you must tell me which of the two men you want to be like, Abraham or Lot.

One day in their travels they came to a most lovely piece of land. It was gay with flowers, like a garden, and had a river running through it keeping it fresh and green. There Abraham and Lot pitched their tents. By this time they had large flocks of sheep and goats and cows, and servants to take care of them. The servants began quarrelling among themselves. Abraham's servants wanted the greenest spots for feeding their flocks and Lot's servants did also, and both wanted the best places in the river for giving

drink to their animals. When Abraham saw that the men were quarrelling he told Lot that they had better divide the land so that their flocks and servants would be separated: "If thou wilt take the left hand then I will go to the right," the uncle said; "or if thou wilt take the right hand then I will go to the left." Abraham was much older than his nephew and had always been very kind to him, and Lot should have given his uncle the first choice. Do you think he did? No, he chose the whole lovely piece of land which was like a garden with the river running through it for himself. Abraham was so generous that he let him keep it; and then Abraham travelled with his wife and servants and flocks towards the mountains, where they pitched their tents and built an altar.

One day when Abraham was standing at the door of his tent he saw a man coming towards him whose clothing was torn and dusty, and whose face was white with weariness and fear. He fell at Abraham's feet, and told him in gasps that Lot and all his friends who lived in the lovely valley had been beaten in a battle against four kings.

The kings had killed many of Lot's friends, and the rest of them, with all the gold and silver and flocks which they owned, they had carried away. Among the prisoners was Lot. The poor man who told the story had been taken prisoner too, but had managed to run away.

As soon as Abraham learned this news he called his servants together, and giving them swords and bows and arrows he led them hastily after the four kings. Then in the darkness of the night Abraham's servants made a great circle around the army of the four kings. While the army slept Abraham's men fell upon them, and when they woke and tried to run away they were surrounded and beaten. In the centre of the camp Abraham found Lot and his friends who had been made prisoners, and he freed them all, giving them back the gold and silver and flocks which the kings had stolen.

Was that not a splendid way for Abraham to treat Lot who had been so mean to him? Abraham did not do it with any hope of a reward; he knew that Lot would probably never even say "thank you," but Abraham

was rewarded. God was watching him and the night that Abraham returned to his own tent God spoke to him beside the altar. He said: "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy exceeding great reward."

Then after a time God sent Abraham and Sarah a little son. He was their first baby and they had longed for a baby boy more than for anything else in the world. That was the greatest reward for their generous lives they could have had. They named him Isaac, which means "to laugh," because Sarah in her great happiness cried, "God has made me laugh so that all who hear will laugh with me." And as Abraham loved and trusted God so Isaac loved and trusted his father; in all the stories of fathers and sons throughout the world there has never been one who obeyed his father more perfectly than Isaac did Abraham.

As the years passed Lot grew more wicked and miserable, but Abraham's life was very happy. He had children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren and at last in the long line of Abraham's family was born Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

VI

Rebekah at the Well

Genesis 24

YEARS ago, before there were steam cars, or ferry-boats, how did people travel? On horses or donkeys, or camels. Perhaps you have seen camels in the park. They are better than horses or donkeys to travel with, because they can go a long time without eating or drinking. They can eat and drink a great deal at one time, and then travel on that for many days. I am going to tell you about two men who took long journeys with camels.

One of them was a man who left his home and travelled over miles and miles of desert to a far country, because God had told him to. He made his home in that strange country and there his little boy was born. Do you remember the story about Abraham and his boy Isaac?

The man who travelled with his camels all

the miles away from home and friends was Abraham, and Isaac was his little boy. After a while Isaac grew up, and what does every boy want when he grows up? He wants to have a home of his own, with a wife and children to work for. So Isaac wanted a wife, and his father wished him to choose a daughter of one of his father's friends in his old home.

So Abraham called his servant, and told him to take ten camels and travel back over those miles of desert, and there choose a wife for his boy. The servant took ten camels, and Abraham had them laden with gold and silver and beautiful clothes to give to the maiden who would leave her home and come back to be his son's wife.

Then the servant started on his long journey. At last the desert was crossed, and one evening he reached the city where Abraham used to live. Outside of it was a well, and there the girls and women came every day at sunset to draw water. The servant meant to ask one of them to be his young master's wife, but how do you suppose he knew whom to choose? Do you think he chose the most

beautiful, or the one with the prettiest clothes? No, he had a better plan than that for finding out who would make a good wife.

He made his camels kneel down near the well. They were tired and thirsty, and so was he. He leaned on his staff and watched the maidens and the women come one by one to the well, let a bucket down into it, draw up the water and fill their pitchers. Then the servant prayed. He asked God to help him choose a good wife for his young master. He said: "Behold I stand by the fountain of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. Let it come to pass that the maiden to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,' and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also'; let her be the one Thou hast chosen for Thy servant Isaac."

As he finished praying he looked up and saw a maiden named Rebekah come out of the city and walk towards the well, with a pitcher on her shoulder.

She looked very sweet and lovely as she went down to the well and filled her pitcher.

REBECCA AT THE WELL

The servant ran to meet her. "Give me a little water to drink, I pray thee," he said. She answered: "Drink, my lord," and at once she lifted the pitcher down from her shoulder and gave him a drink.

When he had finished she looked at the tired, thirsty camels and said, "I will draw water for thy camels also." So she emptied her pitcher into a trough before the camels and ran again to the well to draw more water for them. They must have wanted a great deal of water, for it was a long time since they had had any, and Rebekah went back and forth from the well to the trough until they had had enough.

The servant watched her without speaking until the camels had finished drinking. Then he gave her a golden earring, and two gold bracelets, from the box of treasures Abraham had sent to the maiden he should choose for Isaac, and asked her if there were room in her father's house for him to spend the night.

Again she showed how kind she was, for she answered: "We have both room and food enough for you and the camels." So the servant knew that God had helped him

and sent him to a maiden who was as good and kind as she was beautiful.

He went to Rebekah's house and told her family what he had come for. He found that they had known Abraham years before, when he had lived in that country, and they were glad to hear about his journey to the far-away land and of his home there. Then they called Rebekah and asked her if she would go with the servant to be Isaac's wife, and she said, "I will go."

She was brave, was she not, to be willing to take that long journey away from her home? But she felt sure God wanted her to go to Isaac, and that was why she said at once, "I will go."

She rode one of the camels for days and days over the desert, until one evening they came near a field where a man was walking alone. Who do you think it was? It was Isaac. He lifted his eyes and saw the camels coming, and upon one of them the beautiful woman who had promised to be his wife.

When she saw Isaac she alighted from her camel and drew her soft white veil all around her; it even covered her face. Then Isaac

came to meet her and took her to his mother's tent, and soon after that they were married. They loved each other dearly and were always very happy together.

VII

Jacob and the Angels

Genesis 27, 28

WE have a story to-day about a grandchild, a boy who went on a long journey to a place where his grandfather lived when he was a boy. Our last story was about journeys with camels, but this grandchild did not travel on a camel, he walked all the way. He travelled from Abraham's home in the far-away land to the country where his grandfather had lived as a boy. For Abraham was the grandfather, and his grandchild's name was Jacob. His mother was the beautiful Rebekah I told you about, who was so kind to the camels. She had two boys, Esau and Jacob.

One day Esau, who was the elder, had a quarrel with Jacob. Esau had something wonderful which he did not care much for, and which Jacob wanted very much. So Jacob bought it from him, for a bowl of soup, and Esau was so hungry just then

that he was glad to sell the wonderful gift for something to eat. It was foolish of him, and when he had eaten the soup and was no longer hungry, he was sorry. For the wonderful thing he had sold to Jacob meant a great deal; it was the right after their father died to take his place and own all his lands and flocks, and to be the ruler of the family. So Esau wanted the wonderful gift back again, and grew angry because Jacob would not give it back, and wished to kill Jacob. Then their mother told Jacob to leave home and go on a long journey, to the land where she had lived when she was a girl, the land his grandfather came from. She kissed him good-bye, and his father gave him his blessing. The blessing was part of the wonderful gift Jacob had bought from his brother. Jacob must have been lonely as he started off, travelling by himself on that long journey, leaving his home and friends and going to a place where he did not know any one. There was not even a camel or a donkey to ride on and keep him company. He walked all that long way, alone. But there was some one watching him and taking care of him. Who

was it? You know that it was his Father, God. But Jacob did not understand that. He was sure that God watched over his father and mother, and all in his home; but he did not know that God was with him, too, and that even if he travelled to the end of the world, God would still be with him.

When the day was over and the sun had set, Jacob was on a stony hillside, where there were no trees to sleep under, and no soft grass upon which to lie down. He took one of the stones for his pillow, and with only the starry sky above him fell asleep. Then a beautiful dream came to him. The stony hillside was not lonely and forlorn any more. For in the dream a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and up and down that ladder came beautiful, shining angels of God. Above them stood God, and said:

"Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."

Wasn't that a wonderful, happy dream? Jacob woke up and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. This is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Then early in the morning, as soon as it began to grow light, Jacob got up and knelt beside the stone he had used for a pillow. There he prayed to God, who he knew now was near him, promising to stop at this same place when he came back from his long journey. And on that stone he promised to build a church in which all travellers could stop and learn that God was as close to them in that lonely place as in their own homes, and that He would be with them always wherever they went.

VIII

Joseph the Dreamer

Genesis 37 : 1–11

ONCE there lived an old man who had twelve sons. They lived very far away from here, where there were no streets nor houses. It was all country, mountains and fields, or plains as they are called.

On those plains this old man, Jacob, and his sons lived. They slept in tents, when they were at home. But often their father sent them to work in the corn-fields, or to take the sheep far away where the grass was green, and then they just slept out-of-doors on their cloaks. Ten of these boys were big and strong ; they worked hard all day and slept soundly all night, and did not bother much about any one else as long as they were warm and comfortable, and had enough to eat.

One was only a very little boy ; his name was Benjamin, and he was too small to go

off and do anything in the corn-fields, or to feed the flocks, with his brothers. He stayed at home with his father.

The twelfth son, Joseph, was older than little Benjamin, but younger than the others, and different from them. He liked to go off by himself and dream about what he was going to do when he grew up. He liked that better than eating a big dinner and going to sleep. So his brothers thought he was very queer, and laughed at him. Sometimes he told his father what the boys had said to him, and that made them angry. But the father loved Joseph more than all his sons. He made him a beautiful coat to wear, a coat of many colours. When the big brothers saw that, they hated Joseph and would not speak kindly to him nor say "Peace," when they met, which is what people always said in that country, if they were polite.

Well, one day all the sons, except Benjamin, went to the corn-fields to cut down the ripe yellow corn. All the morning they worked cutting it down, and then binding it into bundles, which we call sheaves. It was hot in the middle of the day, and the young

men were tired, so after dinner they lay down and went to sleep. Joseph lay down too, but he did not go to sleep at once. He was wondering what he would do when he grew great and powerful, as he meant to. While he wondered, with his eyes half closed, he looked at the sheaves of corn, tied up and shining in the sun. There were twelve of them, eleven big ones and one little one. "Those are like my brothers," he thought; "the little one is Benjamin's sheaf, and the one off in the corner, away from the others, is mine."

Then he grew a little sleepy, as he lay in the heat and looked at the sheaves, and it seemed to him that they began to move! They moved until his sheaf was standing up straight in the middle and all the others were standing around it. Then they began to bow; only his sheaf stood up straight and stiff, like a king, while all the "brother" sheaves bowed low to it.

When the brothers woke up Joseph told them what he had dreamed, how his sheaf stood upright and their sheaves stood round about and bowed to it. They did not like that. "Shalt thou indeed reign over us?"

they said; and they hated him more than ever.

Another day the eleven brothers went out with the sheep. They had to take them so far, before they found a good feeding place, that they could not go home that night. After supper they lay down on their cloaks and went to sleep. At least all but Joseph went to sleep; he lay quietly on the ground watching the sun set and the stars come out. There was a little moon too that night, which grew bright in the sky, while the sun went down in the west, and the stars began to twinkle.

"That big sun is like my father," he thought, "and the lovely moon is my mother, and those eleven stars are my brothers; Benjamin is the littlest bright one."

He grew drowsy watching them until suddenly it seemed as if the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars all began bowing to him. That was a wonderful dream! He told his father and his brothers about it as soon as he got home. His father was surprised and said:

"What is this dream that thou hast

dreamed? Shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren indeed come to bow ourselves to thee to the earth?" The brothers were displeased, but his father remembered these dreams and wondered if they would come true, and if his boy was going to be a great man.

Children like to think of the wonderful things they will do when they are men and women. Some of them are going to do great things, and it is fun to think about them. Boys often dream of being soldiers, and girls often think how beautiful it would be to be real mothers, with little live babies, instead of dolls, to take care of. It is more fun than eating or sleeping sometimes, to dream of what we are going to be and do. There is only one thing we must remember. Whether our dreams come true or not, our lives must be cheerful and kind and brave. Joseph was a good dreamer and some of his dreams did come true, but he was, more than anything else, a faithful and splendid man. Next time I will tell you about some of the noble things he did.

IX

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

Genesis 37 : 12 to end

SOON after Joseph had dreamed these dreams, his brothers went, without him, to feed their father's sheep and goats in a quiet place, far away from home. They had been gone several days when their father called Joseph, and told him to go after his brothers and see if it were well with them and if the flocks were safe.

So Joseph put on his best coat, the coat of many colours, you remember, which his father had made for him, and started. When he was still a long way off from where the brothers were, they saw him coming. I suppose they saw the bright colours of that beautiful coat long before they could have seen the boy inside of it. They were very mean, those brothers. They hated Joseph, because their father had given him that coat, and because Joseph had dreamed of being a great man. So now, when they saw him

coming, a wicked thought came into their minds; they planned to get rid of him, to kill him.

"Behold, this dreamer cometh," one said; "come now, let us kill him and throw him into a pit, and we will say some wild beast hath eaten him; then we shall see what will become of his dreams!"

Nine big, strong men planning to kill one boy; that was terrible, was it not? But the eldest brother was sorry for Joseph and said, "Let us not kill him ourselves, but throw him into this pit and leave him." He meant, after the others had gone, to come back and pull Joseph out, and take him to their father.

So when Joseph reached them they tore his coat from him, his coat of many colours, and threw him into a deep pit. Then, thinking their brother would soon die for want of food and water, they themselves sat down to eat their dinner. While they were eating they heard a loud jingling of bells, and looking up saw a lot of camels coming, on which were seated men and women. The camels had many bells hanging upon them and bags of spices, and this company was going to a southern country, Egypt, to sell the spices. Another of the brothers had begun to feel

A CARAVAN IN EGYPT

ashamed of what they had done with Joseph, and when he saw this procession coming he said:

"What good will it do if we kill our brother? Come, let us sell him to these people and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh."

So they pulled Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the men with the camels, for twenty pieces of silver. It was mean to sell him, although it was better than killing him. But then they did a heartless thing. They killed one of their goats, and taking Joseph's beautiful coat they dipped it into the blood. When they reached home they brought the coat, the coat of many colours, to their father and said: "We have found this coat; do you know whether it is Joseph's?"

Their father did know it, of course, and cried, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath eaten him. Joseph is surely torn in pieces!" And he put ashes on his head, and tore his clothes and wept, and no one could comfort him. But even then the brothers did not tell him that it was a lie, and that Joseph was really alive and down in Egypt.

In the next story I will tell you what was happening to him there.

X

Joseph the Ruler

Genesis 39, 40, 41, 42: 1–5

WHEN the men with the camels, who had bought Joseph from his brothers, reached Egypt, they sold him to a rich man. This man was an officer in the king's army, who lived in a big house and had many servants to work for him. He bought Joseph because he needed another servant.

Suppose you were taken far away to a strange land, where no one knew you or cared for you, and sold to some one. I am sure you would not feel very happy. But Joseph was not all alone, and because he never forgot that, he was brave and cheerful even in that strange land, and did his work well. As the Bible says, "The Lord was with him." When his rich master saw that, he made Joseph the head of the house, and gave him charge of all that he had.

That was a fine place for Joseph. But one

day some one asked him to do something wrong, and because he said, "No," he was put into prison. It must have been dark there, and crowded, and horrid. If you and I had been put into such a place we might have been angry and unhappy. But Joseph knew that the same dear Friend was with him, even there. So he was happy and bright and looked around for some one to help. There were lots of unhappy prisoners there, and Joseph helped them all. Then when the keeper of the prison saw, as the rich officer had seen, that the Lord was with Joseph, he put him in charge of the whole prison and everybody in it. The prisoners must have been glad to have that splendid, cheerful Joseph taking care of them.

After a time one of the prisoners was let out. He was a servant of the king and he told the king about Joseph. So the king sent for him, and when he saw, as the rich officer had seen and the keeper of the prison had seen, that God was with Joseph, he kept him in his palace. He took his ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and dressed him in fine, soft clothes, and

put a gold chain around his neck. Then the king gave him a chariot to ride in, next to his own, and made him a ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Several years passed, and a great famine came. That means that there was no food and the people were hungry. But Joseph had filled big barns with corn, and when the poor people came, crying for bread, he opened the barns and gave them food.

But far away from Egypt there was an old man, living on the plains with his eleven sons, and they were hungry. For the famine was there, too. You know who they were, Joseph's father and brothers. They had no food, and they heard that down in Egypt there was corn. So ten of the sons took donkeys and started for Egypt to buy food. The eleventh was small Benjamin, and his father would not let him go. He was afraid some harm might come to the boy, and kept him at home.

We must wait for the next story to know what happened to the brothers in Joseph's palace in Egypt.

XI

Joseph Forgiving His Brothers

Genesis 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 : 1–12

WHEN I shut my eyes now I can see a picture. If you will shut your eyes, I will tell you what the picture is, and then you can tell me of whom it is.

I see ten donkeys, in a line, one behind the other. There is a man on the back of each donkey, and every man has an empty sack, hanging at the saddle in front of him. The men look thin and hungry, as if they had not had anything to eat for a long time. They are going down to Egypt to buy corn, because there is none in their own country, and they and their families are hungry. As they ride they are thinking sadly of a brother, whom they sold years ago to a band of camel drivers, who were also going down to Egypt. They think he is dead and that they will never see him again.

Now, who were they all, the riders and the lost brother? What had become of him?

If you remember you will know that when the brothers reached Egypt, and were taken to the ruler who sold the corn, they found that he was their own brother!

But at first they did not know that this great man in his fine clothes was the boy they had sold to the camel drivers so many years before. When they came into the large room where he was, they bowed down to the earth before him. Then Joseph saw them and knew who they were, and remembered his dream. Do you remember it? About the sheaves of wheat, and the stars, bowing down before him? His dream had come true. This was his chance if he wanted to punish those brothers who had treated him so cruelly. They were hungry now, bowing before him and asking for food. If he refused to give it to them it would punish them for the time when he, a boy, had begged them, with tears, not to sell him to the camel drivers, to be taken away from his father and his home.

What do you suppose he did? Who was

with him always? It was God, and when we know that God is beside us we cannot be unforgiving or mean, we just have to be good and loving.

So Joseph forgave his brothers and fed them, but he did not tell them yet who he was. He longed to see Benjamin, and told the older brothers to bring him down with them when they came again, or they could have no more corn. Then he told his servant to fill his brothers' sacks with corn, and on top of the corn to put back the money they had paid for it. So the corn was a present, you see. The brothers reached home after the long journey and told their father about the ruler, who had given them the corn, and who wanted to see their brother Benjamin.

"No," said their father. "My son Benjamin shall not go down with you, for his brother Joseph is dead, and he is left alone. If harm came to him by the way, then would you bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

But soon the corn they had brought was all gone and once more they began to be very hungry. Some of the brothers were

married, and their babies were crying for food. Then they begged their father to let Benjamin go with them, and at last he yielded and told them to take the boy and to carry presents to the ruler, fruit and honey and nuts, and: "God Almighty give you mercy before the man," he said.

So again they travelled with the donkeys to Egypt, and went to Joseph's house. When he came in he found them waiting for him, and they gave him the presents and bowed to the earth before him.

"Is your father well?" he asked, "the old man of whom you spoke, is he yet alive?" And they said: "Our father is in good health, he is yet alive." And they bowed again.

Then Joseph looked at them all, and when he saw Benjamin, he could bear it no longer. The tears streamed down his face and he said: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt." His brothers were frightened; they could not answer him. But he put his arms around their necks, and kissed them and cried with them, until they understood that he loved and forgave them.

He told them that they must hurry home and get their father whom he was longing to see, and bring the dear old man to Egypt. And there they must live, they and their wives and their children, and the best of the land should be theirs.

So they went home and told their father the great news, that Joseph was alive. Oh, how joyful he must have been!

"It is enough," he said. "Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

So all together they went to Egypt, and lived in a beautiful house which Joseph gave them. There he took care of them, and was with his dear father until the old man died, happily and peacefully, because he was with his beloved son, Joseph.

XII

The Baby Boy Moses

Exodus 2 : 1–10

ONCE there was a wicked king, who wanted his whole country for himself; he did not want any strangers to come there. But there were some strangers living there, who were called Hebrews. They were splendid people, who loved God and tried to be good. Still the king did not want them in his country, and planned how to get rid of them.

First, he made them work very hard. They had to make bricks and carry heavy loads in the hot sun; he thought that would kill them. But they were strong people, and the hard work did not kill them; there were more and more of them, men and women, boys and girls and babies.

Then the king tried another plan. He said that every baby boy born to the Hebrew mothers should be thrown into the river. The girls might be left alive, but all the boys should be drowned.

Just after the king made this wicked law, a Hebrew woman had a baby boy. He was a beautiful, strong baby, and she loved him dearly. She made up her mind that the king should not take him from her, and she prayed God to help her keep him safe Then what do you suppose she did? She hid him. She kept him in a back room, perhaps behind closed doors and windows. His cry was so small, that it was hard for any one to hear it, or if any one did, perhaps he thought it was a kitten mewing. But after a while the baby, Moses was his name, grew, and then his cry was louder, and sometimes he laughed and crowed quite noisily, and his mother was afraid some one would hear him and tell the king she had a baby son, and then the king would send men to take him from her. So she made a basket. She wove tall grass, rushes we call them, and when the basket was finished she painted it, so that no water could get in, and it would be warm and dry inside, and into it she put the baby boy.

Moses had a sister, older than he, named Miriam. She helped her mother make the

basket and watched her put the baby in and cover him up. All the time I am sure the mother was praying God to take care of her little son and not to let any harm come to him. Then early in the morning she and Miriam took the basket down to the river, and in the water near the bank, among the tall grasses growing there, they laid it, with tiny Moses still inside. Miriam was left to watch it. She stood a little way off to see what would happen. After a while the king's daughter, the princess, came down to the river to go in bathing. She was walking along by the riverside, with her ladies-in-waiting, when she saw a little basket lying among the tall grass in the water. What could be in it? she wondered, and she sent her maid to bring it to her. But when she opened it, what did she find inside? Yes, a little baby, a baby who, when he saw the strange faces, began to cry. Then the princess took him in her arms; she was so sorry for him, and she said, "Surely this must be one of the Hebrews' children. I will keep him for my own."

Miriam, who had been watching all this

THE FINDING OF MOSES

time to see that no harm came to her baby brother, now came up to the princess and bowed low before her, saying, "Shall I go and call one of the Hebrew women to be a nurse to the baby for you?" The princess said, "Go."

The little girl went, and whom do you suppose she called to be a nurse for baby Moses? His own mother, though the princess did not know it; but I think Moses knew, don't you? And I think he just cuddled down in her arms and went happily to sleep there, after all his adventures. And his mother nursed him and cared for him, and when he was bigger he lived in the palace of the princess, and she treated him as her son.

So the prayer the mother made to God to take care of her baby was answered; he was not hurt by the wicked king, and grew up to be a great and good man.

XIII

Moses the Leader

Exodus 3; 12: 34–39; 13: 20–22

YOU have sometimes played Follow the Leader, have you not?

Suppose you had to travel through dark woods, and over deserts, and your leader had never been there before. He would go to some one who had been there, and knew the best paths, and he would ask him to tell him—tell him what? Yes, tell him the way to go. And when he was leading the others through dark woods, or travelling at night, he would need something to make him able to see the path. What would he need? A light. I am going to tell you about a man named Moses, who was a leader, one of the greatest who ever lived, and when I have finished you must tell me who showed Moses the way to lead his followers, and what he had for a light.

In a country far away from their home many people were living, weary and sad.

The wicked king of that country made them work so hard that sometimes they just fell down while they were working, they were so tired, and then they were beaten to make them work again. Now these people knew that there was a King in heaven, much greater than this wicked one, and every day they cried to Him to help them. Who was that Heavenly King? Do you think He heard their cry? Listen, and you will hear what God did for them.

Moses, whose mother hid him when he was a baby and whom the princess took care of, was one of these people. After many years he became a shepherd. As he led his sheep up a mountain one day he saw a bush burning; flames of fire came from it and yet it was not burnt up. He turned aside to see so wonderful a sight, a bush on fire and yet not burnt, and, as he turned, God called to him out of the midst of the burning bush saying, "Moses, Moses." Moses answered: "Here am I."

Then God said, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

So Moses took them off and hid his face, for he was afraid; he was standing in the presence of God!

Then God said: "I have surely seen the suffering of my people and have heard their cry, for I know their sorrows. And I have come down to take them out of the land of the wicked king, and to bring them unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey."

And God told Moses that He would send him to lead the people to this new, beautiful land. At first Moses was afraid to be a leader; he did not think he was brave enough or strong enough, but God said, "Certainly I will be with thee." So Moses was brave again and went back to the people, and when he told them what had happened, that God had heard their cry to come and help them, they bowed their heads and praised Him.

Then one night, when it was all dark, Moses led his people out of the country of the wicked king. Some of the women had made bread that evening, and had put it in pans to raise, meaning to bake it in the morning. But they could not wait, and

bound the pans full of dough in their clothes and carried them over their shoulders. The men led their goats and sheep, the women carried sleeping babies in their arms, and the boys and girls helped. All carried something, for they were hurrying away to a new land, and never meant to go back to the country of the cruel king.

How do you suppose Moses knew the way to lead them? He had to have some one who knew the path to show him. And what must he have had to show his followers the way in the dark? A light. But what a big light it would have to be to show the way to thousands of people! Brighter than a street light, or an automobile lantern. Well, it was brighter than many electric lamps; it was the most wonderful kind of light you can think of. It was a great, high cloud, which at night turned into fire, a pillar of fire they called it, and it was so big and bright that it gave light to all the people.

But there was something about it even more wonderful than the light it gave. The angel of the Lord was in the cloud, and moved always ahead of them, showing them

the way. Across the desert, over mountains, through woods and rivers, the cloud with the angel moved on ahead, always showing them the best paths, never letting them lose their way.

Let us see in our minds how they travelled. First the great cloud moving slowly ahead of them, tall and dark in the daytime, bright and shining at night. Then Moses, in long, flowing clothes, with a rod in his hand, leading all the people, who followed him as he followed the angel-cloud. Behind him marched the men and women, the boys and girls and little children, and, last of all, behind the women and children, were more men driving the flocks, the sheep and goats, and keeping a watch at the back to see that no one was lost or left behind in the march.

Over all God watched and took care of them, and just as He heard their cry and came to help them, so He hears us when we pray to Him, and watches over us, day and night. We do not see a shining cloud with God's angel leading us, but God Himself sees us always, and loves us, and takes care of us. So we need never be afraid, even if we lose

our way sometimes. Even if we are alone in the dark night, our Heavenly Father is with us, and no harm can come to us while we trust Him as our Leader.

Next time I will tell you about something which happened at the beginning of the journey.

XIV

The Red Sea

Exodus 14: 5 to end; 15: 1–22

WHEN the wicked king found that Moses had led the people out of his country he was very angry, and called at once for his soldiers, and his chariots, hundreds of them. Then as fast as possible they hurried after Moses and his followers.

Those poor people had no horses nor chariots, and in a short time the king overtook them. They had been marching on happily following the cloud and fire God had sent to guide them, thankful to leave the country of that bad king. Suddenly they heard a noise behind them, and looking back they saw in the distance the shining chariots of the king. Oh, how frightened they were! They ran about wildly and cried to Moses: "Why hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? It would have been better to stay in the land of the wicked king than to have died here!" But Moses was not afraid. "Fear not, stand

ye still," said he. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

The chariots of the king were coming nearer and nearer, but suddenly the cloud with the angel of God, which went before the people, moved, and went behind them, standing between them and the army of the king.

As night fell the cloud became a bright light towards Moses and his followers, but on the side facing the king it was a cloud of darkness, through which no one could see. It was like a thick fog, and the soldiers stumbled and fell when they tried to march through it, so the whole army had to stand still.

In front of Moses and his followers stretched a sea, the Red Sea it was called. They had no boats in which to cross it, and with the army behind them and the sea in front, there seemed to be every chance of their being caught. But God was on their side, and one man with God helping him is stronger than a thousand men without Him.

This is what God did for His people that night. He sent a strong east wind, and it blew the waters of the Red Sea all night long, so that when the morning came the sea was

divided, and between the two parts of water the people saw a path of dry land, stretching all the way across the sea, to the other side. Over the path they hurried, and behind them came the many chariots of the wicked king, for it was light then, and they could see the men ahead of them. At last Moses and his people, men, women and little children, reached the other side in safety, and behind them plunged the chariot horses. The wheels of those heavy chariots stuck in the mud and came off, so the army could not travel fast, but soon a worse thing than that happened to them. God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea, and the waters would roll back again, covering the cruel soldiers and their horses and chariots. So Moses stretched out his hand and the waters rolled back in great waves, covering the king, the soldiers and the horses, so that they were all drowned.

That is the story of how God saved His people that day from the hand of the wicked king, and when Moses and his followers saw it they trusted God as they had never done before, and sang beautiful songs about His glory and His mercy.

XV

Joshua the Soldier

Joshua 5 : 13 to end ; 6 : 1–20

WHO would like to be a soldier? Show me how a soldier stands, how he salutes, how he holds his gun when marching and firing. It would be splendid to be a real soldier, I think. To wear a blue coat and brass buttons, to carry a gun or to beat a drum, and to do the fine brave things a good soldier is always ready for. There was a splendid soldier once, named Joshua. He was such a good soldier, so obedient and brave, that he was given command of a whole army while he was still young.

Do you know what the commander of an army is called? A general. So Joshua was a general, but he didn't wear a blue coat or brass buttons, because he lived thousands of years ago in a country far away from here, and the soldiers then wore loose, brightly-coloured clothes, with armour over them. That means a shield and a helmet, and pieces

of brass on their arms and legs; they did not have any guns either, but they carried swords and used them to fight with.

One day Joshua was standing outside of a city which had a wall around it. Inside that wall there were hundreds of men who hated Joshua, and he was trying to make them come out and fight his army. But they would not come because they were afraid, and they just shut up their city gates tightly and would let no one come in or go out. There did not seem to be any way to make them fight, for the city walls were so high that no one could climb over them from the outside.

Joshua was standing there wondering what he would do. As he looked up towards the walls he saw a man standing near him, whom he had not seen a moment before. The man had a drawn sword in his hand, and Joshua walked swiftly over to him and asked, "Art thou for us, or for our enemy?"

The man answered, "Nay, but as captain of the Host of the Lord am I now come."

Then Joshua knew that he was talking to an angel of God, and he fell on his face to

the earth and said, "What saith my Lord to His servant?" He was a great general, you know, but he knew that an angel from God was far greater than he was.

The angel said, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot—for the place whereon thou standest is holy," and Joshua did so.

Then the angel told him that God wanted him to have that city and all the men in it. He told him how to take it. I will tell you what Joshua did the next day and then you will know what the angel said to him.

There were some ministers called priests in Joshua's army. They did not fight but they held services for the soldiers, and they were to help Joshua take the city. Seven of them marched out of the camp early the next morning. They wore flowing white clothes, with coloured embroidery and little, tinkling, golden bells. They did not wear any armour, or carry swords, but instead they each carried a trumpet. In front of them and behind them marched the soldiers, their armour shining in the sun, their swords clanging at their sides.

All marched slowly around the walled

city, and as they marched the priests blew on their trumpets. Except for that there was no noise, and nobody spoke a word. When they had marched all the way around they went back to the camp.

The second day the same thing happened, and the people inside the city walls must have wondered what it meant. The long line of soldiers marching so quietly, then the priests blowing the trumpets as they marched, and after them more quiet soldiers. They did not know that an angel of God had told Joshua to do this, and that very soon they and their city would be in his hands. Every day for six days Joshua's army marched once around the city and back to the camp but on the seventh day the line did not go back. They went on marching, until they had been around seven times.

Then Joshua said to his men, "Shout now, for the Lord has given you the city," and while the priests blew upon their triumpets, the whole army gave a great shout, and behold the wall of the city fell down flat! Then the soldiers rushed in and took the people prisoners.

So God gave the city to Joshua and his army, and I think that one of the reasons He did it was because of Joshua's quick obedience in doing just what the angel told him to do.

Shall we all try to be good soldiers, obeying our mothers and fathers and teachers, quickly, when they speak to us?

XVI

The Boy Samuel

1 Samuel 1; 2: 1–11, 18–21; 3: 1–10

ONCE upon a time there lived a woman whose name was Hannah. She and her husband loved each other dearly and would have been very happy, but there was one thing which made Hannah sad,—she had no little children. Oh, she did want a baby so much! The more she thought of it the sadder she grew, until one day, when she sat down to dinner, she could not eat; she just cried and cried. Her husband tried to comfort her; he told her he loved her more than ten little sons could. He was very good to her, but still she was unhappy; she longed for a baby to hold in her arms, and to rock, and to love, as only mothers can.

After dinner Hannah went to church, and there she knelt and prayed God to send her a little boy. She prayed so hard that the tears streamed down her face. She promised

God that if He would let her have a boy, she would give him to the Lord, and that all the days of his life that son should work for Him.

Then a wonderful thing happened. God sent Hannah what she had longed for, a little son. Hannah was so happy, so happy that, instead of crying any more, she sang the most beautiful songs of praise and thanks to God for His gift. She named the boy Samuel, which means "asked of God."

While he was a tiny baby she kept him by her, and then, as soon as he was old enough to run about, she took him to the church where she had prayed God to give her a baby.

What promise did she make when she prayed that day? She said she would give her boy to God. Now she meant to keep that promise. Dearly as she loved having Samuel run around the house, and play by her side, she was going to let him live in God's house, away from her, so that he could grow up working for Him.

She gave him to the minister who lived in a room on one side of the beautiful church,

and Samuel had a little room on the other side. At night there was a lighted lamp hanging in the church. While Samuel was sleeping the light of it grew dimmer and dimmer until, when the morning light came, it went out. Then Samuel would jump out of bed, and, running to the great doors of the church, throw them open, letting the sunshine in. That was his work, opening the doors in the morning and closing them at night, and taking care of the lamp.

Hannah lived quite far away in the country, but every year she came to the church to see her boy. He wore a white linen dress, the kind the minister wore, and every time his mother came to see him she brought him a little coat she had made.

So Samuel grew older. He was a splendid boy, good, and bright, and cheerful, and every one loved him. Now comes the best part of the story.

One night the minister was lying asleep in his room on one side of the church, and Samuel was asleep in his little room on the other side. In the church it was very quiet, the lamp was burning dimly, though it

hadn't quite gone out, when suddenly a beautiful voice rang through the church to Samuel's room.

"Samuel," it said, and Samuel thought it was the minister calling him.

"Here am I," he answered, and ran into the minister's room saying, "Here am I, for thou calledst me."

"I called not," said the minister; "lie down again." So the boy went back to bed.

Then again the voice came saying: "Samuel."

Whose voice do you suppose it was? It was God's voice, speaking to Samuel, but Samuel did not know it was, and again he ran to the minister saying:

"Here am I, for thou didst call me," and the minister said:

"No, I called not, my boy, lie down again."

When it was all quiet God spoke a third time, "Samuel." This time when Samuel ran to the minister saying: "Here am I, for thou didst call me," the minister knew it must be the Lord who called.

"Go, lie down," he said to the little boy;

"and if God calls thee again say: 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'"

So Samuel went back to his room and lay down, and soon God's voice sounded again calling, "Samuel, Samuel," and little Samuel, kneeling at the foot of his bed, said, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Then God talked to him, and told him what He wanted him to do. Wasn't that wonderful to have God come and talk to a little boy, just as if your father were sitting here, talking to you!

God is as near as that to every one of us; we cannot hear Him as Samuel could, but He hears us and wants us to work for Him as Samuel did. We cannot open church doors, or take care of church lamps, but we can help our mothers and take care of the babies for God. And some day, when we go to heaven, we shall hear Him calling us by our names,—that same beautiful voice that called "Samuel, Samuel."

RUTH AND NAOMI

XVII

The Story of Ruth

Book of Ruth

IT was a sad woman who once started off on a journey with two girls. She wore a long black dress, and a black veil wound around her head, and her eyes were full of tears. Her name was Naomi. Her husband was dead, her two boys had just died, and she was going back to the country where she had lived when she was a child. The two girls who were with her were girls she loved very much, who had been very good to her and her boys, but after she had gone a little way with them she stopped and said:

"Go back to your homes now, to your brothers and sisters and friends. I am going to a far-away country you have never seen. It makes me sadder still to say good-bye to you, but I know you will be happier there."

Then one of the girls kissed her good-bye, and, turning, went back to her home, but the other, whose name was Ruth, put her arms around her and said:

"Intreat me not to leave thee, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God."

Naomi said, "Can you bear to leave your home and friends to go and take care of a poor old woman?"

Ruth said, "I am young and strong, you are old and sad; I will go with you and take care of you as long as we both live."

So they travelled on together, walking many miles, over hills and across plains, in the sun and rain, sleeping under the stars perhaps, until they came to a little town among the hills, the town of Bethlehem. They looked down on it and saw that the fields were full of tall, yellow stalks of wheat and barley. Ruth left Naomi in a little house they found and went out into the barley fields; there the men had sickles, and mowed the grain, and the women gathered it up in bundles. Poor people sometimes walked after the women and picked up what they dropped. So Ruth followed them, picking up pieces of the long yellow stalks, with the barley in the flower part at the top. It

was hard work, for the sun beat down, and she had to bend and bend. But she thought of poor sad Naomi, who was hungry, and then Ruth did not mind if she was tired and hot, she worked on gladly.

Towards evening the owner of the field came to see how the reapers were working. He raised his hand and said, "The Lord be with thee." And all the men and women in the field stopped working and answered: "The Lord bless thee."

Then the master saw Ruth. She wore a blue skirt and a red jacket, a veil was twisted around her neck, and gold coins glittered among her hair. The master asked one of the reapers who she was, and the reaper said: "Her family and friends live in a country far from here, but she has left them all and travelled here to take care of the poor, sad woman, Naomi." So the master called Ruth to him and told her to come every day and pick up the barley which was dropped, and also to have dinner in the middle of the day with his workmen, and eat the corn and the bread he gave them.

Ruth bowed low to him and asked:

"Why art thou so kind to me, I, who am a stranger?"

And the master said, "Because I know how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and thy home to take care of a poor, sad woman. May the Lord bless thee and reward thee."

As he walked away across the field he stopped and told the reapers to let Ruth gather the barley that was dropped, and also to let fall some extra pieces for her. So day after day Ruth came to gather grain. She lived with Naomi, and each night she brought her back the barley, and made it into bread for them.

As day after day the owner watched her, he saw how good she was and how hard she worked for Naomi, and one day he asked her to marry him, and to bring Naomi to live in his big comfortable home. There they were all very happy together; soon God sent Ruth a baby boy, and when Naomi held it in her arms she was comforted for the loss of her own boys, and thanked God for His care of her and of her dear Ruth. This tiny baby became the grandfather of a little boy named David. We shall have a story about him soon.

XVIII

David the Shepherd Boy

1 Samuel 17 : 34–37

THERE was once a shepherd boy, named David, who lived out on the hills day and night, taking care of his father's sheep. His great-grandmother was Ruth, whom we had a story about, and her little baby became his grandfather.

When the sun shone warm and bright David would lead the sheep far away, until they reached green fields and quiet streams. Then they would stop, and eat, and drink, and rest.

Sometimes storms would come, thunder and lightning and heavy rain. Then David would lead his flock into a safe, dry cave and, sitting at the entrance, he would watch the trees breaking under the wind, and the lightning flashing, and listen to the thunder rolling. Then he would sing beautiful songs. One was about the storm. He said the thunder was God's voice, and that He sent the

rain, and the wind which caused the trees to bow before Him. He said, in the song, that God was taking care of him and the sheep, leading them to the rocky cave, and that they should never be afraid, they should always trust in His care.

When the storm was over and the sun shining, David would lead the sheep out again to the fresh green fields, wet with rain. He went before, and they all followed him.

He was beautiful, this shepherd boy. His face was brown and tanned by the sun and wind. He had fair, curly hair, and was so strong, and brave, and happy, that every one who saw him loved him. He wore a sheepskin for a cloak, and over his shoulder was slung a harp. Did you ever see a harp? Show me how it is played.

When evening came and the little stars began to twinkle in the sky, David played his harp, and while he played he sang those beautiful songs.

One night David watched the sun set, and the moon and stars come out, and while he watched them shining he sang a song about them, saying they shone with the glory of

God. Then putting his harp down, he lay beside his sheep and rested. The little lambs were cuddled up close to their mothers, and all was quiet and peaceful in the moonlight. Then out of the woods near by came a dark animal. It was a big brown bear, and it had come to steal a lamb. Nearer and nearer it came, then suddenly it stopped, and giving a great cry of anger and pain, it rolled over —dead. What do you suppose had happened? David had taken a sharp stone and, putting it into a sling, made of a long piece of string, he had let it fly right at the bear's forehead. So the lambs were saved.

Another time a lion sprang from behind a rock and, seizing a baby-lamb in his mouth, started to run away with it. In a second David was after him. But what could one boy do against a savage lion? He couldn't have done anything if he had been afraid, but he knew God was watching him, and he never thought of fear. He let one of his sharp stones fly at the lion's head. It struck him, but did not kill him, and letting the baby-lamb go, he turned roaring, and sprang upon David. But David caught him by his beard, and with

the shepherd's staff struck and struck him, until the great animal fell back, dead.

Don't you suppose those sheep and lambs loved David? I don't believe they were ever afraid when he was near, do you? Even when the storm crashed around them, and bears and lions came near to kill them, I am sure they knew that their good shepherd would let no harm come to them.

And, just as the sheep trusted David to take care of them, so David trusted Some One to take care of him. Who was it? One of the lovely songs he sang was about his trust in God. He sang "The Lord is my Shepherd." We can all say that, God is our Shepherd, too. Let us say it together.

"The Lord is my Shepherd,
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
He leadeth me beside the still waters,
He restoreth my soul.

* * * * * *

Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

DAVID AND THE LION

XIX

David and the King

(Suggested by Browning's "Saul")

1 Samuel 16 : 14 to end

WHILE David was living so happily out on the hills, singing and playing his harp, and taking care of the sheep, there lived a king in the city near by, who was as sad as David was joyful.

He lived in a great, beautiful palace, his robes were made of purple and gold, and he feasted on the finest food in the land,—yet he was filled with sadness.

Once he had been a splendid soldier, leading his people to battle, and all who saw him pass would cry "Long live King Saul!" But now he did not fight battles any more, he did not even sit on his golden throne, with his soldiers and servants around him. He was so unhappy that he could not move, he just hung with his arms over a bar of

wood which went across a tent, his head fallen forward, his eyes closed. He wore rich heavy clothes, which shone with jewels, red, blue, and yellow. But even the jewels looked dull in that dark tent, where the poor wretched King Saul hung, as if he were almost dead.

"What shall we do for him?" the people asked. "What will make our king happy again and brave, as he used to be?"

Then one of the soldiers remembered that out on the hills he had seen a shepherd boy, a boy whose face shone with joy while he played a harp and sang.

"Perhaps if he would come and play with his harp the king would be well," he said.

So David was sent for. They could hardly wait for him to come. All those people loved their king so much that when he was sad and sick they were wretched. For three days he had hung in that tent, not speaking nor moving, and this was their last hope of curing him. If the shepherd boy could not help they feared King Saul would never be well.

At last David came, his golden hair

shining, his face full of joy. His harp-strings were twined with sweet, fresh lilies to keep the strings from breaking in the heat, for it was hotter there than the very hottest day here.

Do you think he was afraid? He was only a boy, you know, and behind that tent curtain was the great king! All the people were watching him. They had given him the hardest task they knew of. They had all tried to help the king and had failed, and now they were asking a shepherd boy to do it. It was enough to have made one of us just shake with fear, but do you think he did? You remember when the bear came and the lion, to steal a lamb, he was not afraid. Whom did he trust to help him then? So now again, he trusted God to help him cure that great king.

For a moment he knelt in prayer upon the sand outside the tent, then lifting the tent-curtain he went in, saying, "Here is David, thy servant." All was blackness at first, but soon in the middle of the tent he saw something blacker than the blackness. It was the king, miserable, half-dead with wretchedness.

leaning upon the wooden bar which went across the tent.

Quickly David took the lilies off the harp-strings, and began to play. He played first the tune all the sheep knew, soft and sweet, which brought them home one after another, as the stars came out. Then he played other tunes, some happy and bright, some low and sweet, some loud and solemn.

At last the great figure moved and out of the darkness the king groaned. He moved his head, and the red and blue jewels flashed. Then once more David bent to his harp, and while he played he sang. He sang about the king, what a wonderful soldier he had been, what a wise king, how his people loved him. Again the king moved. He stood upright and looked at David with sad eyes, while he laid one of his large hands on the boy's head. He was better, David knew, but not well yet. What should he sing about that would cure him, and bring him joy? David felt that he would die gladly if he could first help this king, whom he loved with all his heart.

Throwing aside his harp, he began again

to sing. He sang about God now, of His love for all His animals, and of His love for us. It was such a wonderful song, it filled the whole tent with joy and gladness. He sang of the love we have for each other, of his, David's, love for the king. He said that if he could grow poor to make him rich, if he could starve to feed him, or suffer to help him, he would do it. And then, in his song, he said that God loves us the same way we love one another, only more, so much more that we can never reach the end.

When David finished that song he stole quietly out of the tent, and ran home in the night, joyfully, oh, so joyfully, for he knew that King Saul was well again. He was the great, brave king he used to be; the shepherd boy had cured him.

We cannot play the harp or sing as David did, but we can all have joyful, shining faces such as his was. Shall we try to see how bright and cheerful we can look?

Remember how one happy boy healed a great, wretched king, and see what we can do.

XX

David and the Giant

1 Samuel 17

IN the country where David lived, there were two high mountains with a valley between them. On one mountain were King Saul and all his army. On the other mountain stood a great giant named Goliath, and behind him was an army of men who hated King Saul, and wanted to kill him and all his soldiers.

Every day the giant stood up on the mountain where all could see him; he was so tall that you wouldn't have come as high as his knees. Upon his head was a helmet of brass, and his whole great body was covered with brazen armour; even on his legs there were heavy brass pieces. In his hand he held a long staff with a sharp spear point at the end, by his side hung a sword, and a man went before him carrying a shield.

There on the mountain top he stood and

shouted across the valley to Saul's army: "Why have you come out to fight, you servants of Saul? Choose a man and let him come down to me; if he fight me and kill me then will we be your servants, but if I kill him you shall be our servants. I defy you this day!"

When Saul and his soldiers heard these words, and looked at the terrible giant, they trembled with fear. No one dared go out and fight him. Two of the soldiers were older brothers of David; they saw the giant every day and heard him, but they were as afraid of him as all the rest of the army.

What was David doing all this time? Feeding his father's sheep on the hillside, away from armies, and fighting, and giants. But one day his father called him and told him to take some corn and loaves of bread to his soldier brothers, and some cheeses to their captain. So David got up very early the next morning and leaving his sheep with a keeper, carried the food to the mountain where the army of Saul was camped.

Just as he reached there whom do you suppose he saw upon the mountain across the

valley? The giant, and he called again the same words, daring any man to come down and fight him. David listened to him, and saw Saul's soldiers running away to their tents in fear. That surprised him; he wondered how any giant, however big and strong, dared to come out against Saul's army, "the army of the living God," David called it.

Then David spoke to King Saul, and told him that he would go out to fight this giant. And the king said: "But you are only a boy, and this man is a warlike giant. You are not able to fight him." David answered, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock, and I went after them and killed them. I will kill this giant as I did the bear and the lion, since he has defied the army of the living God."

It was a wonderfully brave thing for a boy to say, wasn't it? Why do you suppose David dared fight the giant when all those strong men were afraid to? Because they only trusted in themselves, and knew the giant was stronger than they were, but

David trusted in some one stronger than the giant. He said: "The Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this giant."

And Saul said: "Go, and the Lord be with thee." First, Saul put his armour on David, and placed a helmet on his head and gave him his sword. But David said: "I cannot go with these; I have never worn them." And he took them off. All he carried was his shepherd's staff and his sling, and from the brook near by he chose five smooth stones and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had hanging from his belt.

Down the mountain towards the giant he went. And down the mountain on the other side came the giant, but when he saw who had come to fight him, a boy with a bright fair face, he was angry.

"Am I a dog," he cried, "that you come to me with a stick?" And he cursed David.

Then the giant called: "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field."

Do you suppose that frightened David?

Listen to what he answered. He said: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of Saul's army, whom thou hast defied."

So down upon David came the giant, big and strong, and heavy in his brass armour, and David, light, and young and quick, ran to meet him. He put his hand in his bag, and taking a stone placed it in his sling, and straight at the giant's forehead he let it fly. Deep into the giant's head it went, and he fell upon his face to the earth. But it hadn't killed him, and David had no sword, you know, so he ran and stood upon the giant, and taking the giant's sword he killed him and cut off his head.

When the army of the giant saw that, they turned and ran away over the mountains, and, with a shout of joy, Saul's soldiers ran after them and took them prisoners.

So the shepherd boy, with a sling and a stone and the help of God, won a great battle.

XXI

How God Took Care of Elijah

1 Kings 17 : 1–7 ; James 5 : 17, 18

ONCE upon a time in a very wild part of a country, full of high mountains and roaring streams, but with little green grass, there lived some tall, strong people. They built small stone houses for themselves on the mountainside, but most of the time they spent out-of-doors taking care of sheep, and ploughing the hard ground.

One man who lived there was named Elijah. He was as tall and strong as any of the men on the mountains. Like them he ran long races without getting tired; like them he took care of the sheep and spent many nights on the mountainside. But unlike them most of his thoughts were about God. When he was a boy his mother and father had told him the stories which we know of Abraham and his boy, and of Joseph

and Moses and others whom God loved and spoke to. Those men had all belonged to the country where Elijah lived, the country of Israel.

Elijah's home on the mountains was far from any city, but from travellers he learned that all over the country people had ceased praying to God, and were praying instead to ugly pieces of stone and wood. They had a king who was foolish and bad, and a queen who was very cruel and wicked.

It seemed terrible to Elijah that the children of all the splendid people of whom God had taken such care, should turn from Him. He longed to do something to make them good again; to make them love God and pray to Him as their fathers had done. But what could he do? He knew that the cruel queen had killed all the people she could find who prayed to God, and even if he reached the palace of the king alive, of what use would that be? He wore no purple and fine linen, like those who lived in kings' houses, but only a camel's skin; his hair was long and tangled; surely he would not be allowed to enter.

But he knew there was one thing he could do; the one thing we all can do whenever we are in trouble. He could pray. He prayed God to punish the people of Israel, who were so wicked, by not sending any rain or dew upon the country. If that happened the people would have no water to drink and the ground would become hard and no crops could grow. Elijah hoped that when the people were hungry and thirsty they would be sorry for their sins, and pray to God again.

Then God spoke to Elijah. He told him that his prayer was answered. No rain nor dew would fall upon the land until the people turned again to Him. And He told Elijah to go to the king of Israel and tell him what the punishment meant.

Do you think that Elijah was afraid to go? He knew that God would be with him, and very fearlessly he crossed the high mountains which surrounded his home and journeyed to the palace of the king. The king was seated on a golden throne at the end of a great hall. He was dressed in splendid robes and had a crown upon his head. By his side sat the cruel

queen, glittering with jewels. There were servants standing at the door of the hall, and soldiers guarding the gates of the palace to keep out strangers. We do not know how Elijah made his way past them, but I think he looked so strong and fearless, that they were afraid to refuse to let him enter.

At last he stood before the king, and although the king wore gorgeous clothes and had a crown upon his head, Elijah, dressed in his camel's skin, looked far more like a true king than the man seated upon the throne.

Then Elijah gave his message: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand," he said, "there shall not be any dew or rain these years but according to my word!"

Then he turned and walked out of the palace. No one dared touch him, although the cruel queen must have longed to have had him killed on the spot.

Again God spoke to Elijah. He told him to go to a little brook in a lonely place where no one lived, and He would take care of him. So Elijah found the brook rippling down a

hillside, and on the soft grass beside it he lay down and went to sleep. The next morning when he woke he heard a strange flapping noise. It came nearer and nearer, and soon, flying over his head, Elijah saw a flock of black ravens. They each carried something in their beaks and as they flew down and alighted beside him, he saw it was food, bread and meat. The ravens dropped the food on the green grass beside him and flew away. It was for him. It was his breakfast, which God was sending. He had fresh water from the brook to drink with it and it was a nice meal.

In the evening the same flapping noise sounded, and again the ravens came flying, this time with supper for him in their beaks.

So God took care of Elijah, as He had promised He would, and for some time he was very happy in that beautiful spot, with soft grass to lie upon and kind birds to feed him. But one day he noticed that the brook seemed much shallower, and every day after that it grew lower and lower, until there was not enough water to ripple over the stones. There had been no rain, you know, and the

brook was drying up. Do you think Elijah was troubled and wondered what would become of him when those last drops of water were gone and there was nothing for him to drink? He knew that God, who had taken care of him in the palace of the king, and upon this lonely hillside, would never leave him. In the next story we shall hear how God fed him after the water dried up.

XXII

The Barrel of Meal and the Cruse of Oil

1 Kings 17 : 7–16

AS God took care of Elijah in our last story, so He did now.

When the little brook dried up God spoke to Elijah again. He told him to take a long journey across the country of the bad king to a little city on the seashore, and there he would find a woman who would give him food.

So Elijah started, but as he travelled he grew sadder and sadder at what he saw around him. For no rain had fallen, you know, and the fields were dry and brown ; there were no streams of water rippling down the hillside and the people he passed were hungry and thirsty and very weak. Sometimes he met a shepherd, who had led his poor thin sheep far from home with the hope of finding some green grass and a little stream, but had found none. Sometimes on lonely hillsides,

he saw men praying to ugly pieces of stone, and he longed with all his heart to have them pray instead to God, who would hear and help them. At last, late one afternoon, he saw the blue sea and near it a little city with a wall around it. Elijah was very hungry and thirsty and tired. No one had given him anything to eat or drink on that long journey, and outside of the city wall he sank down, too weary to go any farther.

Then he noticed a poor woman near him picking up little sticks and twigs and putting them into her apron. He called to her and said, "Bring me, I pray thee, a little water that I may drink." The woman turned at once to go, for she knew where some water was, and Elijah called after her: "Bring me also, I pray thee, a little piece of bread in thy hand." Then the woman came to him with tears streaming down her face. "I have no bread," she said, "only a handful of flour in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse (that means a bottle); and see, I am gathering these sticks that I may make a fire and bake a cake for my boy and me. After that food is gone, we shall die of hunger."

"Fear not," said Elijah; "go and make a little cake and bring it to me, and God will take care of thee and thy boy, for thus saith the Lord God, 'The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.'"

Do you think she believed him? We shall see.

Patiently Elijah waited while the woman went to her house; perhaps he, too, wondered whether she would trust his word and give him all the food she had, leaving her boy hungry. But soon she came back and in her hand was a tiny cake! After Elijah had eaten it he went with her into the house. The boy was waiting there; perhaps he had helped make the cake; and now he watched eagerly to see what he and his mother would have for their supper. The woman went to the barrel from which she had taken the last handful of flour, and what do you think she found? The barrel was filled with nice, white meal. She lifted the bottle from which she had poured the last drop of oil, and it was heavy, for it was full of oil.

Oh, how happy she was! She made another cake for herself and her hungry boy, and they thanked Elijah and thanked God for sending him to them.

So Elijah stayed in the little house with the boy and his mother, and the barrel of meal did not waste, neither did the cruse of oil fail, until rain fell again upon the earth.

XXIII

Elijah and the Little Boy

1 Kings 17 : 17 to end

DO you remember the little boy who helped make a cake for Elijah after his long journey?

Elijah stayed at his house for a long time, and the boy's mother made cakes and bread every day for them to eat. What did she make them of? Of the flour which wasted not and the oil which did not fail.

The mother and her boy became very fond of Elijah. They gave him the loft over the house to sleep in. It was reached by a tiny staircase outside of the house, and many times every day the little boy ran up and down those stairs, for he loved to be with the "Man of God," as he called Elijah. Elijah knew the most beautiful stories, for you remember that during all the years when he was a shepherd boy, living on the wild mountains, he had been told many of the stories we have had in this book. We can

think of the little boy as curled up on the floor near Elijah, or sitting beside his mother in front of a blazing fire down-stairs, listening to stories about Jacob and the angels, or the baby boy Moses, or Samuel to whom God spoke. Can you think of some other stories Elijah may have told?

But one day the boy did not come running up the staircase as usual to the loft. Elijah missed him and went down to see where he was. He found the mother crying, and the boy lying in her arms very weak and white, and hardly breathing. While they watched, the poor boy's body grew so tired that he stopped breathing, and his angel spirit flew away, leaving only the tired little body behind.

When the mother saw that her child was dead, she was so wretched and unhappy that she did not know just what she was saying, and she cried to Elijah: "Oh, thou man of God, art thou come here to kill my boy?"

"Give me thy son," said Elijah. And very tenderly he took the little body out of the mother's arms. He carried him up the staircase to his loft and laid him upon his own bed. Beside the bed he knelt and prayed to God. Very earnestly he prayed

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW'S SON

and three times he stretched himself upon the little body crying, "Oh, Lord my God, I pray Thee let this child's spirit come unto him again."

Then the colour came back to the little boy's cheeks; he breathed and opened his eyes; his angel spirit had come back. Joyfully Elijah lifted him in his arms and carried him down the stairs. At the foot stood the mother weeping.

"See, thy son liveth," said Elijah, and when the mother raised her eyes she saw her boy, with life and colour in his face, smiling at her. She stretched out her arms towards him, all her sorrows turned to great joy. "Now," she said to Elijah as she took the child and clasped him lovingly in her arms, "now I know that thou art truly a man of God."

Such a happy supper they must have had together that evening. And many evenings afterwards they were together, until one day God spoke again to Elijah. He told him to leave that little home and go with a message to the bad king.

The message meant a great deal to thousands of people. We shall hear about it in the next story.

XXIV

Fire from Heaven

1 Kings 18

WHILE Elijah was living with the little boy and his mother, what was happening to the people in Israel?

They were still praying to the pieces of stone and wood, and no rain had fallen for so long a time that they were dying of hunger and thirst. Then God spoke again to Elijah, and gave him a joyful message to carry.

"Go show thyself to the king," He said, "and I will send rain upon the earth."

So Elijah hurried across the country to the king's palace. He saw poor animals lying dead by the roadside, and sick and wretched people with no food for themselves or their hungry children, and he must have rejoiced to know that God would soon send them rain. But before the rain came, God wanted the people to stop praying to the images of stone and wood and turn to Him, their Father. So Elijah told the king

to go to a high mountain by the seashore, and to take with him the hundreds of men who taught the people to pray to the ugly images. Those men were called priests of Baal, and they were very wicked. The king obeyed and drove up the mountainside in his golden chariot. Around him marched hundreds of wicked priests, dressed in gorgeous clothes, with small golden suns flashing on their foreheads. Behind them came thousands of people; men and women whose fathers had loved and prayed to God, but whom the priests had taught to bow down before the images and to lead sinful lives. Before them all stood one man, tall and strong, with long hair and flashing eyes, wearing a camel's skin. Who was he? It was Elijah. And although he was only one man facing those thousands who hated him, we need not feel sorry for him. God was with him, and one man with God by his side is more powerful than a whole army without Him. For listen to what happened.

When the king and the priests and the people were gathered together upon the mountain, Elijah spoke to them.

"Let us take two oxen," he said, "and cut each in pieces and lay them on two separate piles of wood with no fire underneath. Then call ye on the names of your images of stone and wood, and I will call on the name of God. The one who answers the prayer by sending down fire from heaven to burn the ox, let him be God." Then all the people shouted, "It is well spoken." First the wicked priests took their ox, cut it in pieces and placed them on a pile of wood. Then they prayed to the ugliest of all their stone images, which they called Baal. "Oh, Baal, hear us!" they cried, and they jumped upon the pile of wood, crying louder and louder. But there was no answer. No voice spoke and no fire came down from heaven. All the morning passed and afternoon came. They grew more and more excited. As they cried aloud, they danced and cut themselves with knives until their blood flowed. Still nothing happened. There was no voice, no fire, no answer.

When evening came, it was Elijah's turn. Very quietly he spoke to all the people. "Come near unto me," he said. And as

they drew close around him he built a little altar of twelve stones. Upon it he placed the wood and the second ox, cut in pieces. "Fill your barrels with water," he said, "and pour it over the altar." He wanted them to see that there was no fire hidden underneath. I suppose they brought the water from the blue sea at the foot of the mountain. Three times the men poured it all over the pieces of the ox, and the wood, until a stream of water ran around the bottom of the altar.

Then Elijah came near and prayed. It was a wonderful prayer, so different from the wild cries of the priest of Baal. Elijah knew he was speaking to God, who would hear and answer him, and he prayed solemnly and with all his heart.

"Lord God," he prayed, "let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel and that I am Thy servant. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that these people may know that Thou art God and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again."

The prayer was finished, the great crowd watched and waited; then a light flashed before their eyes, as the fire of the Lord fell

from heaven. It burnt up the ox, the wood, and the stones, even the dust below the altar, and licked up the water around it. With a cry the people all fell upon their faces. "The Lord, He is God," they cried, "the Lord, He is God."

At last they had turned to God, and soon after they rose from their knees the sky became full of black clouds, and there was the rushing sound of a mighty wind. After all those months the rain was coming! As the king in his chariot hurried back to his palace, many miles away, he was caught in a great storm. The chariot horses were tearing at full speed, but before them ran a man. He ran so fast that even the king's horses could not catch up with him, and he reached the palace before the king. It was Elijah, filled with joy and thankfulness. The prayer he had made so many years ago on the mountainside was answered. God had taught the people of Israel to pray to Him, and that night in the homes all over the land fathers were breaking the images of stone, and gathering their families together to pray to God, their Father in heaven.

XXV

The Story of Four Boys

Daniel 1

ONCE upon a time, long, long ago, there lived a great king, who fought many battles. This king did not know about our God in heaven, but prayed to blocks of wood and stone with ugly images carved upon them. One of the battles he fought was against a people who believed in God. He won the victory, for the people were not good and God wanted them to lose to teach them to be better.

After the battle the king sent one of his servants to bring him four boys from among the people he had conquered. They must be the sons of princes, children who were strong and fine looking, and clever in their studies. He wanted to take them back to his own country, to live in his palace, and to learn to speak the language of his people. They must be strong or they would die of home-

sickness so far away from their homes; and clever, for the language was very hard to learn; and of course they must be beautiful to look upon, or they would not be wanted to stand in the palace of the king.

The servant chose four very fine boys, and they were taken miles and miles away, to the country of the great king. Their names were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Let us say them together, for it is worth while to know the names of those four boys; we are going to have such fine stories about them.

This story is about their life in the king's palace. The king himself lived in magnificent fashion. He had chariots to drive in, and soft flowing clothes to wear, and when he sat down to eat, his table was loaded with the best food that could be found, all very sweet, and very rich. The dishes were of gold and silver, and the jewelled cups were filled with many kinds of wine. The king wanted the four boys he had brought back to enjoy themselves, as well as to keep strong, so he sent them every day food from his table, in silver dishes, and shining cups full

of wine. Do you think that is the kind of food which makes a boy or girl well and strong? Indeed it is not. The sweet pies, and cake, and candy you eat do not make you grow one bit taller or rosier, but the bread, and the potatoes, and green vegetables do; and the longer you go without wine, or beer, and drink only pure water, the stronger men and women you will be.

One of the four boys, Daniel, knew this; I think their mothers had fed them always on good, simple food, and that was the reason they were so fair to look upon.

When the tray of silver dishes was brought to the boys, Daniel asked the king's servant, who took charge of them, not to make them eat that rich food. This servant loved Daniel dearly and would gladly have let him do as he asked, but he was afraid that the king would be angry. "I fear my lord the king," he said, "who hath sent you food and drink. If he sees your faces growing thin, he may punish me by cutting off my head." But Daniel knew that their faces would not grow thin if they ate simple food, that they would grow taller and rosier

than if they ate of the king's dishes, so he said:

"Try us, I pray thee; for ten days let us be given pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our faces be looked upon before thee, and also the faces of the boys who live here and eat always of the king's meat, and as thou seest deal with us."

So the king's servant said he would try them; for ten days they should eat only pulse. That was a food like our beans. There was something else they did which helped them to keep strong and beautiful. What do you do every night and morning? You pray to God, do you not? If you went far away from home, should you always remember to pray? I will tell you of one way to remind you. You can say your prayers the way these boys said theirs. Even if you should forget your prayers, I know you never could forget your home, and these boys used to open the windows of their rooms wide, and facing towards their old home they prayed God to take care of their mothers and fathers so far away, and to help the boys to do always what would

please Him. The next time you are away from home, try that way. Kneel down by a window, and even if your face is not turned towards home, you can see the same sky which your mother sees, and she will seem near, and God will seem very near indeed.

The ten days passed; the king's servant looked at the four boys, and then at the boys who had eaten of the king's food; and what do you think had happened? The faces of the four boys were rosier and plumper, and they looked stronger and brighter than any of the boys who had been living on sweet, rich food and drinking wine.

After a time the king ordered all the boys to be brought to him. He sat on a high golden throne and before him stood the boys of his kingdom, with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The king saw that the four boys were taller and stronger than all the others, but that was not enough. He wanted to find out how much they knew. So all along the line of boys he asked questions. To his surprise, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego not only answered all questions far better than the other boys,

but they knew ten times as much as the wisest men in his kingdom. Was not that splendid?

In the next story you shall hear of something very exciting which happened to those boys soon afterwards.

XXVI

The Burning Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3

OUR last story was about the four boys who were taken far away from their homes to the country of the king who prayed to images of wood and stone.

This story is about a gorgeous image which the king, who was called Nebuchadnezzar, worshipped. He had it made of shining, yellow gold, and it was very big and high. It could not have stood in any house, it was so huge, but the king set it up on a plain, a great field with no trees on it. Then he sent to gather together all the most important people in the kingdom, the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the counsellors and the rulers, to come and see the image he had set up. From all the country round they came, and when they were gathered together, the princes, the govern-

ors, the captains, the judges, the counsellors and the rulers, they stood before the great image.

Among them were three of the four boys, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who had become great men now, and helped the king rule over his kingdom. I think Daniel was away on a journey, for the Bible does not say that he was there.

It must have been a splendid sight. The princes and all the other men wore bright and beautiful clothes, and the image of gold shone so dazzlingly in the sun that they could not look at it. At one side were men with musical instruments, those with strings you play upon, and the brass trumpets you blow. They were not playing, they were waiting and listening with the others to hear what the king wanted them to do in honour of his wonderful image. Soon a man stepped out from the crowd. He was a messenger from the king called a herald, and was to tell them why they had been called together. He cried aloud that all might hear:

"To you it is commanded, O people, nations and languages, that at what time ye

hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, dulcimer and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar, the king, hath set up. And whosoever falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

The furnace was there in front of them, not a big black one like ours, but built into a cave of rock, so that you could stand before it, and see the flames glowing and leaping. It was large, very large, so that many men could be thrown into it if they dared to disobey the king. Do you think there were any men in that crowd who would disobey and run the risk of being thrown into that terrible place, to be burnt up in a flash like a piece of paper?

Listen, and I will tell you if there were any so bold. The musicians began to play, and as soon as the sound of the cornet, flute, harp and all kinds of music was heard by the people, they all fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

I said "all," but there were three men who

stood up straight and looked before them, and did not bow their heads, or bend their knees before that golden image. You can guess who they were, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Some of the princes came near to the king and said, "O king, live forever. Thou, O king, hast made a law, that every man that shall hear the sound of cornet, flute, harp, dulcimer and all kinds of music shall fall down and worship the golden image, and whosoever falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain men thou hast set over part of thy kingdom, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, have not obeyed thee. They serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that those three men be brought before him and he spoke to them and said: "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye

hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, dulcimer and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, well! But if ye worship not ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king:

"If it be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

That was splendid! Their answer to the king is one of the finest speeches in the Bible. But it enraged the king. He was full of fury, his face grew terrible to look upon, and he ordered that the furnace, which was already blazing hot, should be made seven times hotter. Then he commanded the mightiest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and to cast them into the midst of the furnace. They

were bound in their coats and hats and other clothes, and as they were cast into the midst of the blazing fire, the fierce heat burned up those men who had bound them, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell down into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. From where Nebuchadnezzar was sitting he could look right into the furnace, and as soon as the three men were thrown there, he sprang up, greatly astonished and cried to his counsellors, "Did not we cast three men bound, into the midst of the fire?"

They answered, "True, O king."

He said, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and cried, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come hither." And Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out from the midst of the fire.

Then the princes, governors and captains and the king's counsellors, all who were

gathered together, saw the three men as strong and whole as they were before they were cast into the furnace; for the fire had had no power upon them. Not a hair of their heads was singed, nor were their coats scorched nor was there even the smell of burning about them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God, who hath sent His angel and delivered His servants that trusted in Him. Therefore I make a law that every people, nation and language, which speaks against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, because there is no other God that can save men after this sort."

So the king gave even higher places in his kingdom to the three brave men, and he and all his people worshipped the Lord God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

XXVII

How God Punished a Proud King

Daniel 5

A GREAT feast was being held in a king's palace, and thousands of his lords were there with their wives and their friends.

It was the same palace to which the four boys, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had been taken, but the king whom they had served was dead and his son Belshazzar ruled in his stead.

Do you remember about the gold and silver dishes full of rich food, and the jewelled cups of wine which the old king had upon his table? This son had the same shining cups and dishes, but when he, and the lords and ladies with him at the feast, had eaten and drunk a great deal, they called for more precious dishes. There were no others left in the palace, so the king did a dreadful thing. He sent to the church and had the gold and

silver cups and bowls that were used on the altar brought to him. I suppose they were like the silver bowl used now when babies are christened, and the silver cups in our communion service. They belong to God's house, and we are careful and quiet when we touch them, but this wicked king filled them with wine and passed them around the table, and all the guests drank out of them. As they drank they grew noisy and boastful; they praised the gold and silver the cups were made of, and they praised the gods they worshipped; gods made of just such gold and silver, or else of brass and wood and stone.

In the midst of the laughing and feasting the king's face turned deathly pale; his knees shook, and his eyes opened wide with terror. The guests thought that he was sick, but he only pointed a shaking finger at the wall behind them. The wall was of white plaster and a great golden candlestick was standing near throwing its light upon it. There on the bright wall were the fingers of a man's hand, and as they all gazed in terror the hand began to write upon the plaster. This is

what it wrote in great glaring letters, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."

What did the words mean? No one at the feast knew any more than you do, but they were terribly frightened. Shaking with terror the king cried aloud to have all the wisest men of his kingdom brought to him. When they were gathered together he spoke to them and said:

"Whosoever shall read this writing, and tell me what it means, shall be clothed with scarlet, and shall have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

But they only gazed and gazed and shook their heads; not one of them could tell what the terrible looking words meant. How could they find out? The king was growing ill with fear and his lords did not know what to do.

Then the queen came into the banquet hall, and spoke to her husband. "O king, live forever," she said. "Let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy face grow pale. There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the Holy God; him

King Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, trusted. Now let Daniel be called ; he will show us the meaning."

So Daniel was brought before the king, who told him that the wisest men in the kingdom had been sent for and had all failed to read the writing. "I have heard of thee," he said, "that the spirit of God is in thee. Now if thou canst read the writing, and tell me what it means, thou shalt be clothed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Daniel looked straight at the bad king and said, "O thou king, thou hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and hast placed the cups of His house before thee, and thou and thy lords and ladies have drunk wine in them. Thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know, and God, in whose hand thy breath is, thou hast not glorified."

Then Daniel looked at the great white wall where the strange letters, which no man could understand, shone out.

"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," he read. "This is the meaning: 'Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting. Thy kingdom shall be taken away from thee.'"

So Daniel was clothed in scarlet as the king had promised, and a chain of gold was put about his neck, and he was made the third ruler in the kingdom.

But all the time the feast was going on, while the hand was writing, while Daniel was explaining the four words, an army of shepherds, strong brown men, were stealing up the bed of the river which flowed through the city. Under the wall they crept without a sound; they hurried through the dark streets and surrounded the palace where the proud, bad king had feasted, using the cups and bowls from God's house.

When morning dawned the whole rich city belonged to the shepherds who had marched silently up from their own country, and in the palace lay King Belshazzar, dead.

XXVIII

Daniel in the Den of Lions

Daniel 6

IN the story we have just had there were shepherds who marched up from their country while the bad King Belshazzar was feasting, and took his palace and city, and killed him. They had a king of their own, called Darius, and this shepherd king grew very fond of Daniel. The country he had conquered was so big that he could not rule over all of it himself, so he divided it up into many parts and put a prince in charge of each part. Over these princes he put three other men, called presidents, and over all the presidents and princes he put Daniel. That made the princes and presidents angry, and they tried to find out something bad about Daniel to tell the king. But Daniel was very honest and faithful, and they could find nothing about him that was not good. Then they made a wicked plan. They knew that every morning and

evening, and in the middle of the day, Daniel opened his window facing towards his old home, and prayed to God, just as he had done ever since he was a boy. So the presidents of the kingdom and the princes met together and went before the king. "King Darius, live forever," they said. "All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, and the captains wish you to make a law, that whosoever shall pray to God, or to a man, for thirty days, save to thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." It pleased the king to think that every one in his city would be praying to him, as if he were a great God, so he signed this wicked law.

Daniel knew about it. Perhaps he had been standing beside the king's throne when the presidents and princes met there,—and what do you think he did? He went into his house and opened wide the windows facing towards the country where his home was. There he knelt down and prayed and gave thanks to God. That night he did the same thing, and again the next morning. He could have waited until he was in bed,

where no one could see him say his prayers. Or he could have left the windows closed. But he was not ashamed to have any one see him pray, and he was not afraid. The presidents and princes were watching down in the street, peeking from behind the corners perhaps, and when they saw Daniel kneeling beside the open windows, and heard his voice raised in prayer, they hurried to the king.

"Hast thou not made a law," they said "that every man who prays to any God or man for thirty days, save to thee, O king, shall be cast into a den of lions?"

The king answered, "The thing is true."

Then with cruel delight they said, "That Daniel obeys thee not, O king, but says his prayers three times a day." When the king heard that, he was very unhappy, for he loved Daniel and had not dreamed that in making that bad law he would hurt his friend. But the law had been made, and although the king spent all the rest of the day in trying to change it, he could not do it.

So Daniel was brought to the great cage of angry, roaring lions.

Have you ever seen a lion? You know

how fierce it is. Its coat is yellow and shaggy, its eyes glow like burning coals, and you often see it tramping up and down its cage, roaring.

The king's lions were very wild and very hungry, and when the soldiers brought Daniel to the cage the lions dashed themselves against the bars and roared with fury. The cage was opened from above, and right into the midst of the savage animals Daniel was thrown. Very sadly the king stood by and saw it done, and then a ray of hope came to him, and he said to Daniel: "Thy God, whom thou servest, He will deliver thee."

He was not at all sure God could save Daniel from those wild beasts. It was only a hope that perhaps He could. A huge stone was brought and rolled over the opening of the den, and the king sealed it with sealing-wax and with his own ring. Then the king went back to his palace, but could not eat nor listen to music, he was so unhappy. All night he lay awake and thought of Daniel, torn to pieces very likely by the lions. Early in the morning he got up and hurried to the den of lions. When he reached there,

DANIEL'S ANSWER TO THE KING

he cried in a most miserable voice: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest, able to deliver thee from the lions?" He listened eagerly, longing for the sound of Daniel's voice to show he was yet alive. In a loud, strong voice, the answer came:

"O king, live forever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me."

The king was filled with gladness; he called his servants to come and open the den, and take Daniel from it. So he came out. There was not even a scratch upon him, because he had trusted in his God.

Then the king commanded to bring all the cruel presidents and princes, the very men who had tried to kill Daniel, and they were thrown into the den of lions; and the wild beasts broke the bones of the men in pieces before they even reached the bottom of the den. And King Darius made a new law, that all in his kingdom should serve the God of Daniel, the true and living God who had delivered him from the power of the lions.

XXIX

The Coming of the King

Luke 1 : 26–38, 46–55

WHAT wonderful, beautiful day comes in the winter, the best day of all the year? Of course you will say Christmas. When it gets near Christmas time we begin to look forward and count how long it will be before it comes. We say, "Next month Christmas is coming," then "Next week," and at last we say, "To-morrow will be Christmas Day," and we all hang up our stockings. We grow happier every day that brings Christmas nearer, and plan the presents we are going to give people to show how happy we are.

Once, a long, long time ago, there had never been a Christmas day, but the people knew that some year it would come, and they waited and watched for it more even than we do. They were sad and unhappy, those

people who had never had a Christmas, and they had been growing more unhappy and more wicked many of them every year since the time I told you about when Adam and Eve walked with God in the beautiful garden.

So the world grew very sad. There was only one hope which made the people happy. They had been told that some day a King would come, a King who would show them how to be good, and strong, and happy again. The day that King came would be Christmas Day, the first Christmas in the world. That is why all these poor, sorrowful people were watching for the coming of Christmas, the coming of the King.

At last the time for His coming drew near. Do you suppose that the news of it was told to the richest and greatest people in the world, and that they went to meet Him with flags flying and trumpets blowing, and with a gold crown ready to place upon His head? No, the news of the coming of the greatest King the world has ever known was told first to one woman. She was young and very beautiful. Her name was Mary. We know that she must have been beautiful,

because she was good and sweet and loving, and when people are like that it shines in their faces, and they are beautiful.

One day she was walking in a garden thinking thoughts that were as sweet as the flowers around her, when suddenly she saw before her a shining angel. "Hail," he said, "blessed art thou among women." His face was so bright and glistening and his words were so solemn that Mary was frightened at first. But the angel spoke again and the music of his voice and his wonderful message took all fear from her heart.

"Fear not, Mary," he said, "thou shalt have a little child and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be the King who is coming to save the world." He was coming as a child, a little helpless baby, that great King, and Mary was to be His mother. Don't you suppose that she was radiant with happiness? She was so happy that she sang for joy. I think the whole garden was filled with the light of the shining angel and the music of Mary's song.

When God told your mother that He was going to send you as a little baby to her,

she sang in her heart for joy as Mary did. She did not see a great glistening angel perhaps, but she thought she heard the sound of angels' wings, when she knew that you were coming. And since Mary's baby was the most wonderful baby that ever came into the world, her angel must have been the brightest that any mother ever saw and her song the sweetest that any mother ever sang.

The day the baby came to her was the first Christmas Day, His birthday.

XXX

The First Christmas

Luke 2: 1–20

ONE night hundreds of years ago, in a country far across the sea, some shepherds were watching their sheep in the fields. The stars were shining brightly in the deep blue sky, the woolly sheep and lambs were sleeping near by, and it was very still. The shepherds did not dare to go to sleep for fear that a bear or a wolf might steal out of the woods, and springing upon one of their flock, carry it away. So they watched, and while they watched they talked together. They were great strong men, these shepherds, dressed in coarse clothes with crooks in their hands and with kind faces; and they talked about the coming of a King. For they knew that some day a King would come, and they wondered how He would look and what He would do.

"When He comes," they said, "He will be seen here, in Bethlehem," for that was

written in the Bible. Then—a wonderful thing happened!

Out of the starry sky came a beautiful shining angel, and around him and the shepherds shone a great light, the light of the glory of the Lord. It was so strange that the shepherds were afraid. "Fear not," said the beautiful angel; "for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Then suddenly there were with the angel many, many other angels, their shining wings outspread, the whole sky filled with their light and their music, for they were singing the sweetest hymn the world has ever heard. "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men," they sang, until the hills around echoed the music, and even the stars in the sky seemed to be dancing for joy.

Softly the music and the light faded away

into heaven, and the night was quiet again around the shepherds. But their hearts were filled with gladness; the King had come, the King for whom they had watched and waited, and up the steep path to the town of Bethlehem they hurried, their sheep following them. They came to a stable, a kind of cave, and there, with the donkeys, and cows and sheep around Him, lay a wonderful little baby. He was lying in one of the boxes the animals eat out of, a manger, and He was wrapped round and round in soft pieces of muslin, swaddling clothes they are called. So the shepherds knew He was the King, for had not the angels said they would find Him "wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger"?

By His side was His mother, tenderly caring for Him, as your mothers cared for you when you were tiny babies, just come from heaven.

There in the stable the shepherds knelt and worshipped that wonderful Baby, the Child Jesus, the King for whom they had so long watched and waited.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE SHEPHERDS

XXXI

The Story of the Wise Men

Matt. 2 : 1–12

HAVE you seen the stars shining in the night? Some are little twinkling ones, and others are quite big and bright.

In the same country I last told you of and at that very time, there were some wise men, who spent most of the night watching the stars. They named all the big stars, and counted all the little ones they could see.

One night three of these wise men stood in a garden, watching the sky. They were dressed in white woolen cloaks and white pointed caps, and had golden wings across their breasts. They were not counting the stars that night, nor naming them, they were watching for a new star. They had read that a new star would arise in the East to show the world that Christ was born.

So every night for months they had stood

in the dark garden watching and waiting. They began to wonder if they ever would see it, when suddenly they grasped each other's hands in joy. For there in the sky a new star had suddenly appeared, small, but of so wonderful a brightness. Larger and larger it grew, sparkling and flashing through the night, until the light from that one golden star filled the whole garden.

"It is the star," cried the wise men, "the Saviour's star, that shines with light of gold, proclaiming Christ the Lord has come, the King so long foretold."

The star moved; it stopped a moment as if waiting for them to follow, and then very slowly it moved again towards the west, where over many miles of sandy desert lay the little town of Bethlehem.

Outside the gate of the garden stood three camels, laden with many bags as if ready for a journey. The wise men mounted them, and over the desert they hurried, in the path made light by the new star. All night they travelled, and many days and nights, over the hot sands, hardly stopping to eat or to sleep. And always as they travelled they

talked about the King they were going to find, the Christ, who was coming to teach all people how to be happy and how to be good.

At last the desert was crossed and they reached a country where there were many green fields. Over the white roads they hurried, the star leading them, up a steep hill to a little town, the town of Bethlehem. The camels walked one by one through the dark, narrow streets, the star moved more slowly, and the wise men wondered if it would lead them to one of the great palaces. But no, it moved over those, then suddenly it stopped—over a very humble little house. The camels knelt before the door and the wise men stepped off to the ground. The door opened and what did they see inside? What did the shepherds see in the stable? The lovely woman, with the beautiful baby. the little Lord Jesus, asleep beside her.

They fell on their knees before Him and worshipped Him. Then they opened the leather bags their camels had carried; they were full of gold and sweet perfumes, and they laid them at His feet. They had

brought the Lord Jesus their most precious treasures.

Then quietly, and filled with happiness and peace, they rode away. But all their lives they never forgot what they had seen, the little child Jesus Christ, who came into the world to make them and us, and everybody, happy and good.

XXXII

The Story of St. Christopher

Old Legend, to be told as such

SHOULD you like to hear a story about a giant? I knew you would. His name was Christopher and he was a soldier giant, wearing shining armour and carrying a sword. The sword was as long as a little fir tree, and Christopher was so tall that he could step from one hill to another. He fought for a great king, and every battle he fought he won. He was so strong and warlike that people feared him, but he was so brave and beautiful that they loved him too.

One Christmas Eve the great king sat in his hall with his servants and soldiers around him. They were singing Christmas carols, and Christopher noticed that every time the name of Christ was mentioned the king bowed his head.

"Oh, king, why do you bow your head?"

asked Christopher. "Surely there is no greater one than you, to whom you must bow."

Then the king told him about the Lord Christ, the greatest King, and how no other king who ever lived was as strong or as wonderful.

"Then will I serve this greatest King," said Christopher, "for save the strongest none my lord shall be. I'll serve Him and be His forevermore."

So down the hall and out of the castle gates he went, in his shining armour, with his sharp sword clanging at his side. From country to country he wandered asking where he could find the greatest King, the Lord Christ, and fight for Him. At last he met a good old man who said, "My son, the Lord Christ is above you, in heaven, and you cannot serve Him by fighting battles, but in a much harder way; you must lay aside your shining armour and sharp sword, and help all those who are suffering and in need. Only in that way can you serve the greatest King, Christ."

Near where they were standing was a

fearful river; it was so deep and wide and rushing that no one could cross it safely. If any one tried, his boat was broken in pieces and he was dashed upon the rocks. "Here will I live," said the giant Christopher; "and carry across all those who wish to reach the other side of the river."

He took off his shining armour and his sharp sword, and instead he pulled a tree up by its roots and used it for a staff. By the riverside he built a hut, and there, alone, he lived. But always he was ready to carry people over the rushing river, by day or by night, in sunshine or in storm.

At last Christmas Eve came again. It was a dreadful night, snowing and hailing and blowing hard. The hut rocked in the storm, and Christopher thought, "Surely no one will venture out a night like this." But just then he heard a voice calling, "Christopher, Christopher, come and carry me across the river, I pray you." So out into the snow and storm he went, and there what do you suppose he found? A little boy.

Christopher was filled with surprise, but he thought the child must have lost his way,

and lifting him upon his strong shoulders he started to cross the raging river. The wind beat him back, the snow blinded his eyes, and the river rushed and roared around him. That was all hard, but the hardest part was the weight of the little boy. He seemed to grow heavier and heavier until Christopher could hardly stand up. On he pushed and struggled until, at last, worn out, he reached the other side and put the child down. "My child," he said, in wonder, "who are you? It seemed as if I were carrying, not a child, but a mountain, no, a world."

The little boy stood up and a beautiful light came all about him. "I am the Lord Christ," He said, "whom you have longed to find, whose servant you have been. And now you must leave this lonely place and go to far-away lands, where people never heard of Me, and tell them of My love for them." Then He put His hand on Christopher's staff. "Plant this," He said, "and it will blossom, to show you that I am with you."

He was gone. But the snow had stopped, the wind was quiet, the bright stars shone in

the sky as Christopher waded back across the river. In the ground beside his hut he planted his staff, the dead tree, and when the first rays of morning light lit up the sky, the staff was covered with the most beautiful blossoms.

So Christopher knew that he had not only dreamed of the Lord Christ, he had really seen Him and carried Him across the river.

Then, with joy in his heart, he went to the far-away lands, and taught all the poor people there about Jesus, the greatest King, until they too became His followers, loving Him and serving Him as Christopher did.

XXXIII

The Boyhood of Jesus

Luke 2: 40, 51, 52.

WHEN Jesus was a boy He lived in a very beautiful country. There was a high green hill there, and at its foot lay a little village, its white stone houses and churches shining in the sun. That was the village of Nazareth, the home of Mary and Joseph. It was a quiet place, many gardens full of bright flowers were scattered between the small houses, and a clear fountain bubbled up in the centre of the place, where every one who wanted water to drink or wash with had to go and take it home in jars which were carried on the shoulders.

Let us make believe we once walked through those streets on our way to the home of Jesus. We should have passed the fountain round which boys are playing, boys dressed in bright coloured clothes, with red

caps on their heads; we should have seen some gardens and then we should have come to a tiny cottage. It was square and white, green vines covered its walls, and cooing doves were sunning themselves on the roof. A little porch was outside, and inside was only one room, but that was very fresh and clean. In the evening the room was lighted by a brass lamp which hung from the centre of the ceiling. Here the family would gather, seated on the floor in a circle around a painted stool on which was placed a tray with rice and fruits, or rice and meat. This was their supper, and each one helped himself in turn from the tray. On a ledge running around the room were neatly rolled, brightly-coloured quilts. They were the beds, which at night were taken down and rolled out on the floor. Each member of the family curled up upon one and went to sleep. The only furniture in the room, besides the lamp and the stool, was a wooden chest, painted in pretty colours, in which books and pictures were kept.

Long ago a bench used to be placed on the porch in the daytime, and there Joseph,

the father of the house, worked with a saw and hammer, for he was a carpenter. And what do you suppose Jesus did all day? He went to school with the other boys and played with them round the fountain, and perhaps He sometimes climbed with them to the top of the green hill, on which the town was built, and from the top of which on a clear day one could see the blue sea.

But most of the time I think He was at home, helping His mother by taking care of the smaller children, or working at the carpenter's bench with Joseph, for He too was going to be a carpenter. In the evening when the bench had been put away He walked to the fountain with His mother. She wore a long blue dress and a white veil over her head, and carried a brown water pitcher on her shoulder. Perhaps Jesus carried one there too, and they brought back water enough for the evening meal.

Mary worked hard, making bread in the evening and baking it in the morning when it had risen high and white, making clothes out of red and blue cloth for the children, for there were other children all younger than

THE BOY JESUS IN THE CARPENTER'S SHOP

Jesus, and keeping the little house always clean and sweet. After supper I think they sat on the roof of the cottage, which was reached by a little staircase outside. The stars shone brightly above them, and Mary told Jesus stories about Ruth gathering barley, and about David taking care of his sheep and playing his harp, and killing the giant.

In the morning and evening Joseph called his family around him and prayed God to keep them all day and to take care of them all night. On the Sabbath they went together to the little village church and after church the children went to school just as we go to Sunday-school.

So Jesus grew up, tall and strong and good. He learnt many things from Joseph and Mary, and at school, and from the country around His home. Every one loved Him and liked to be with Him, and His Heavenly Father loved Him too.

XXXIV

Jesus the Carpenter

Mark 6 : 3; Luke 4 : 31–41

WHO made these tables and chairs? A carpenter.

Think of how many things the carpenter does for us. In our last story we talked about a very wonderful person who was a carpenter. Who was He? The children in the village where He lived often saw Him going home in the evening with His carpenter's tools. You know what those are.

There have been many good carpenters in the world, but I am sure Jesus was a better workman than any of them. I like to think that if anything in the village needed fixing or mending it was brought to Him. Sometimes a shepherd would ask Him to come to the sheepfold to mend a gate which perhaps had been broken by a wolf trying to get in. Or a farmer would send for Him to mend a stall in his stable, or to make a manger. The work was always well

done, the nails were struck right on the head, the wood was good and strong and was sawed and planed straight and smooth. After the day's work when Jesus was tired, He walked up the mountain behind the village, where He used to climb when a boy, and there under the stars, kneeling on the grass, He prayed to God. Then down the steep little path He would go back, bright and strong, ready to work again when morning came. The people of the village of Nazareth did not know what a wonderful person He was. They called Him "the Carpenter," and they knew that He was a good one. They supposed that He would always stay in their little village, mending their plows and yokes and making new ones. But Jesus knew that some day He must leave the carpenter's bench and go out into the cities, where there were greater things for Him to mend than the little mangers, and sheepfolds, and plows. He knew that the world was full of other broken things, men and women with broken bodies and with broken hearts. You have seen people with broken bodies, have you not? People who are lame, and deaf,

and blind. There were many of them in the country where Jesus lived, and there were many more who were so wicked or so unhappy that it seemed as if their hearts were broken. So Jesus left this home at Nazareth when He was thirty years old, and went to a city not far from there to mend the hearts and bodies of those poor, broken men and women.

There one morning He went to the great white marble church to preach. The church was on the edge of a large blue lake, and everything looked very beautiful and peaceful.

Jesus began to preach and every one in the church sat quietly listening to Him, for they had never heard any one preach as He did. Some of the broken-hearted people were there, and as Jesus told them God's great love for them, the sad ones began to forget their sorrows, and the bad ones began to long to be good. Then suddenly a wild cry rang out in the back of the church. A poor man, whose body was almost worn out with a terrible disease, had slipped in among the listeners, and was screaming with pain. At once Jesus stopped preaching, and turning

to the suffering man, He spoke to him very quietly and sweetly. The man lay screaming on the white stone floor, but as Jesus spoke he grew quiet, the pain left him and he stood up, whole and well.

Oh, the people were so amazed! As they went out of church they could talk of nothing else and they told the story to everybody they met.

Then Jesus walked through the sunny street to the home of a friend of His named Peter. An old grandmother lived there and Peter was sad because she was very ill, tossing from one side of the bed to the other, burning with fever. What do you suppose was the first question Peter asked Jesus when He came into the house? How to cure her. So Jesus stood by the bedside, gentle and strong and loving. He took the grandmother's hand in His and spoke a few words. At once the fever left her; she was all well, and getting up offered them food and drink.

That same evening the most wonderful thing happened. As the sun was setting behind the hills around the lake, the most wretched crowd of people you can think of

gathered at the door of Peter's house. All the sick of the whole city were brought by their family or friends to Jesus to be healed. The lame were carried to Him; the blind were led; men and women were brought, moaning with pain on their beds. Mothers carried their sick little babies, and children led old grandfathers and grandmothers. They were all sick, suffering, and wretched. But among them moved Jesus, His beautiful face shining with love and tenderness. He put His hands upon them one by one, saying a few quiet words to one, smiling at another, taking the poor, white-faced little babies in His arms. And as He touched them, all the pain left them, the colour came back to their cheeks, they walked and were well. As it grew dark and the stars came out the crowd scattered, the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the lame and sick walking, and the little babies sleeping sweetly in their mothers' arms.

Jesus was a carpenter first, you remember, making mangers and mending sheepfolds. He left the carpenter's bench to mend the hearts and bodies of the poor, suffering

people around Him, and He has been doing that ever since, He has never stopped. We can go to Him as the people did that evening beside the lake. We cannot see Him beside us, or feel the touch of His hand, but we know that He is near, and that He is able to mend our hearts when we are unhappy, and to comfort us when our bodies are sick and broken. He can make us as joyful as the people were that night in the happy city, when all the hearts and bodies were mended.

XXXV

Jesus and a Little Girl

Mark 5 : 21–24, 35 to end

DO you remember how you felt when you were sick? It isn't any fun to be really sick, is it? When you have to stay in bed day after day and you don't want anything to eat, and your pillow gets hot, and the noise the other children make hurts your head.

There was once a little girl who was sick like that, many, many years ago. She lived in a big beautiful house in the country, and her father was a ruler, a great man and very rich. She was the only little girl in the family and her father and mother loved her with all their hearts. They would have spent all their money gladly if it would have cured her. They would have done anything in the world to see the colour come back to her cheeks, to see her smile again. But day by day she grew weaker and weaker, until they feared

she would never get well. She lay very white and still, with closed eyes, hardly breathing. Then the father heard that a great teacher had come to that part of the country, a man who healed many who were sick and who was very good to little children. Do you know who it was? It was Jesus; and as soon as the father found that He was near he hurried to Him.

The Master had many people around Him as He talked to them. But the ruler made his way through the crowd and fell at His feet. "My little daughter is dying," he cried; "I pray Thee come and lay Thy hands upon her, that she may be healed, and she shall live." At once Jesus stood up and went with him and the crowd followed Him. They couldn't walk very fast with so many people around them. Some were trying to get near Jesus so that they might see His face, or touch His clothes, and it took a long time to walk to the ruler's house. Before they reached it, a messenger came to meet them, sent by the little girl's mother. He drew the ruler aside and said, "Thy daughter is dead. Why troublest thou the Master?"

But Jesus heard what the messenger said, and saw the look of suffering on the poor father's face, and said, "Be not afraid, only believe."

When they reached the ruler's beautiful house, with the bright gardens and big trees around it, the doors were thrown wide open and through them came the noise of crying, and the music of flutes. In that country, as soon as any one died, the friends paid people to come and cry and to put ashes on their heads, and to play sad tunes on their flutes. The paid people did not really feel sad at all, they just cried because they were given money to do it. Jesus asked them why they made this noise. "The little maid is not dead, but sleepeth," He said. When they heard that they all laughed, for they did not believe Him, and He sent them away. Then He turned to the poor mother. She wasn't sobbing and tearing her hair, like the paid people, but she was sadder than any of them. Her dear little girl was dead, and it seemed to her that all the light and brightness had gone out of the world.

Jesus took her, and the father, and three of

His disciples into the room where the child lay; she was very still and white and her breathing had quite stopped. Very tenderly He bent over her. He took her small cold hand in His, and said, "Little maid, arise." Then the colour came back into the little girl's cheeks, and opening her eyes she got up and stood before them, well and strong.

Oh, how joyful the mother and father must have been! They could hardly believe that their child was alive and well again. To make them understand that it was all true, Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Such a happy supper that must have been! And I think that all the rest of the little girl's life was a happy one. She must have always remembered the wonderful touch of Jesus' hand when He had healed her, and the beautiful face which she saw when she first opened her eyes. He had given her back her life, because her mother and father needed her, and because He needed her also, to be well and happy and to do His work in the world.

He gives us our lives, too. What do you do every morning? You open your eyes,

and wake up, don't you? That was what the ruler's little girl did when Jesus took her hand. She woke up. He gives us our life every single morning, when the night's sleep is over. To-morrow morning when you wake up, I want you to think of that. Think of the little girl who was lying more asleep than you have been all night, and think of Jesus strong and loving standing by her side, holding her hand and saying: "Little maid, arise." Then say to yourself: "He is saying that to me, too." And try all day to use the life He gives you in your hands, and feet, and eyes, and lips, to please Him.

XXXVI

Jesus and the Children

Mark 10 : 13–16

WHENEVER Jesus taught or talked, great crowds collected around Him, eagerly listening to every word He spoke. All kinds of people were in the crowds, rich men and poor men, soldiers with swords by their sides, and priests in long, white garments with coloured embroideries and fringes. Do you suppose that with such a number of people around Him, all pressing close for a sight of His face, all listening to His words, that He ever had time to stop and talk to little children? When you have heard this story I think you will know.

One day there were many persons standing about Jesus, listening to the wonderful words He spoke, when, a little outside the crowd, some women and children gathered. They had come out of the white houses which

covered the green hillsides. They wore red and blue dresses and had handkerchiefs over their heads, for they were poor women, and the children had little clothing. Some of the women carried babies, others held little ones by the hand, while boys and girls ran behind them, clinging to their skirts.

Through the crowd they all pressed until they reached Jesus. Then the mothers, bringing their children to Him, asked Him to bless them, to put His hands upon their heads and pray for them. There were so many of them, babies and children, boys and girls, all pushing close to Jesus,—for they loved Him as soon as they saw His beautiful, kind face,—that His friends stopped the mothers, and told the children to run away. But when Jesus saw that He was displeased and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Then He not only let them come to Him, but He took the babies up in His arms, and laid His hands on the heads of the little boys and girls, or put His arm around them, and blessed them all.

IESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN

It would have been very beautiful to be one of those children, would it not? To have had Jesus put His arm around you, to have looked up into His face and to have seen His smile when He blessed you. But do you know that you can be just as near Him to-day as those children were? Every day in our prayers we can talk to Him, and He can hear us. He is with us every minute, loving us and taking care of us, both when we are children, and when we grow up.

XXXVII

The Good Shepherd

John 10: 1–18

YOU have all seen sheep—the big ones and the little lambs. More than most animals, they need some one to take care of them. It may be a man or a boy, or even a dog. That is the shepherd.

In a country far from here, there were many sheep, and lambs, and shepherds. If you went for a walk you would see every little while a flock lying on the ground or feeding, or meet them blocking up the road, with the shepherd always near them. In that country when the sheep moved from one place to another, the shepherd always went first. At night the shepherd brought them back to their home; it was called a sheep-fold. It had no roof and it must have been pretty cold sometimes, especially for baby lambs.

When the sheep had eaten all the grass

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

near the fold, the shepherd would take them farther away, too far to walk back at night. So they would lie down on the ground under the stars, with no fold around them, and the shepherd would lie down too. But he could not sleep; he had to keep his eyes open to see that no harm came to his flock, and that no wolf nor bear nor lion crept up in the darkness and carried off a sheep or a lamb.

Once there was a fold full of sheep and lambs. The shepherd had put them all in, and then he had shut the door and gone to his own house to sleep. At first the lambs cried after him, Baa-baa, but after a while they cuddled up to their mothers' warm, woolly sides and went to sleep. Suddenly they waked up and listened. Some one was calling them, but it was not their shepherd, their dear master. His voice they knew; it was sweet and clear, but this voice was harsh and rough. It was calling to the sheep to follow, but they did not move, they would follow no one but their shepherd.

Then the man, who had been calling with the rough voice, climbed over the side of the fold. He did not dare open the door. The

sheep ran to the corner, crowding close together, but he lifted them up one after another, and dropped them over outside of the fold. He was a thief and was going to steal them. He climbed over after them and drove them ahead of him, for they would not have followed him. He drove them away from the fold and away from the good shepherd's house.

Suddenly, out of the woods near by, came a wolf. The thief saw him as he came nearer towards the flock, and was filled with fear; he did not mind the sheep's being killed, but he was afraid the wolf would hurt him. He turned and ran, leaving the poor sheep and the crying lambs alone in the dark. Then a voice rang out, a voice the sheep all knew, the dear voice of their good shepherd. He had been to the fold to see if his sheep were safe and warm, and found it empty. As fast as he could he had followed them, and now he had come just in time. With a bleat of joy the flock ran to him crowding close behind him. The wolf was coming nearer and nearer, but the shepherd did not move. He never thought of leaving his sheep; he was

willing to let the wolf kill him if in that way he could save them.

The wolf stood ready to spring, looking up fiercely into the shepherd's face, then he stopped still. The shepherd's eyes were so steady, he looked so strong and brave, that even the wolf did not dare touch him, and turning slowly, crept away into the forest.

Then the good shepherd led the flock back to the fold. The sheep followed close behind him, and the little lambs ran bleating about his feet, while he carried the littlest one in his arms. As they reached the fold the sky grew bright with the rising sun, and the sheep knew there was nothing more for them to fear.

XXXVIII

The Lost Sheep

Luke 15 : 3–7

DO you remember the story about the good shepherd? He had a big flock of sheep, you know. There were a hundred of them, white and black, fat and thin, old sheep and little baby lambs. He loved them all so much, you remember, that he was ready to let the wolf kill him to save them.

One day he lost one of his lambs. He had taken them far off on the mountains, where there was green grass and a fresh little stream. The sun had been shining brightly in the morning and the sheep had had a beautiful time, eating the grass and then lying by the stream in the shade of the trees. But in the afternoon a big black cloud appeared in the sky; there was a flash of lightning, and a rumbling of thunder. The shepherd called the sheep together and started towards home.

Then the rain began to fall and the shepherd put the smallest lamb under his cloak and carried it. There were rough places to climb and streams to cross on the way to the fold, and although the shepherd helped them and lifted many over the streams, they got wet and dirty before they reached home. In one place the path led along the edge of the sea. A great rock there had cracked in the middle and you could look far down between the two pieces of stone to where the sea came breaking in on the beach below.

Some of the sheep started to climb over the rock, but the shepherd called them back and led them around it. When they went on one little lamb was missing, but the shepherd was hurrying them on in the storm and he did not notice it then. But when they reached the sheepfold he opened the door and counted them as they ran in, ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine—that was all, the hundredth was not there, it was lost!

It was dark by that time and storming hard. Do you think the shepherd went back over the rough way to find that little lost lamb? Indeed he did; right off he turned,

leaving the ninety-nine, and went slowly, carefully, over every step of the way he had taken. He carried a lantern in his hand, and he called the lamb softly as he went. Every now and then he stopped to listen. What was he listening for? To hear the lamb if it were crying alone in the dark, so that he could know where it was.

When he got to the split rock by the sea-shore he stopped and called again, lifting the lantern high over his head, but he did not see any little white animal lying there. Then he heard something. It was faint and sounded far away, but it was the bleating of that little lamb. Where do you think it was? It had fallen between the two pieces of rock, and was lying far below on the beach. Its leg was broken so it could not move, but it had heard the shepherd's call and had seen the light from his lantern, and it cried back Baa-baa!

Down the steep rock the shepherd climbed. It was hard work, for the stone sides were slippery and it was deep and dark between the rocks. But the shepherd did not mind. It was harder work getting back, with the little

animal on his shoulder, but he was happy, so happy, because he had found his lost lamb. He sang and rejoiced all the way back in the darkness and the storm. When he reached home he called his friends and neighbours together. "Rejoice with me," he said, "for I have found my lamb which was lost."

It was Jesus who told this story to His friends. He wanted to show them how much He loved every one of them and every one of us. We are all His sheep, or His little lambs, and He is the great shepherd of the sheep; He loves us even more than that good shepherd loved his sheep. He can save us from worse things than wolves; and when one of us does wrong, that is like the little lamb getting lost. But if we call to Him He comes and carries us back in His arms to be good again.

XXXIX

The Lost Money

Luke 15: 8–10

WE have had the story of the shepherd who searched for hours in darkness and storm, to find one little lamb that was lost. Why did he do it? Because he dearly loved his sheep, and each one was very precious in his sight.

I heard of a woman once who had lost something, and will tell you what she did to find it. She lived a long time ago, in a country where poor people's houses had only one room in them. There was no window in those houses, and the only light came through the open door. So you see if anything got lost there it was hard to find it. This woman had several children and it took all her time to earn money enough to buy food and clothes for them. Besides that she was trying to save a little. Every week she took a piece of silver money, as much as our twenty-five cent piece, and put it aside. The

children all stood around while that precious silver piece was taken from the coppers, and put in a place by itself. Perhaps it was put in a box for a bank, or in one of the stockings belonging to the smallest child, who ran around barefoot and did not need any.

I don't know what they meant to do with that money when it had grown to be a great deal. Perhaps they were each going to have new clothes in time to go to the great service that was held each year in the white and gold church in Jerusalem. Perhaps their father was sick and they were saving enough to pay a doctor to cure him. What else do you think they could have been saving for? It might have been any one of these things. We only know that the mother put the silver pieces aside until there were ten of them—ten beautiful shining pieces of silver!

One evening the children stood around their mother. They were dressed in the gaily coloured clothes such as every one wore then, and their smiles were bright, as they watched her count over that splendid jingling pile.

But the next day their happiness had gone, for one of the silver pieces was lost. Through the room they all hunted, looking in the corners, behind the furniture, in the cracks of the wall, while their mother counted the money over and over again. There were only nine pieces, and they knew that the night before they had all counted ten. The smallest children began to cry, so their mother sent them all out-of-doors, and started to search herself.

Where did I tell you the only light in the house came from? Through the door, and that was not enough to light all of the room. So the mother lit a candle, and tucking up her skirts, she began to sweep. They had funny brooms in that country with very long handles and the sweeping part made of twigs. With a broom like that she swept the house, holding the candle in one hand, while she threw its light into the dark corners and cracks and swept them clean. For a long time she did not find anything, except a little dust and cobwebs that had not been seen in the ordinary sweepings. But this was a different kind of cleaning.

The mother had lost something precious, something which she needed and cared for, and which she meant to find. So over the house she went, again and again. At last she saw something shining in a crack in the floor, and eagerly she put her candle down by it and swept hard. There was a little jingle and then out of the crack fell the lost piece of silver. Oh, she was so glad! She threw open the door and called the children, and they came running, and laughed and sang with her. They were so happy they wanted to tell all their friends about it, so they ran down the street and called the neighbours together. "Rejoice with me," said the mother, "for I have found the piece which I had lost."

Sometimes when you are playing some one vexes you and you say, "I won't play any more." Then you go over into a corner, with your mouth going up in the middle, and down in the corners, and the other children lose you from their game. If you are going to keep those corners of your mouth down the children don't care whether you play any more with them or not, but

there is some one who cares very much. Jesus is watching you all the time, you know, and He cares for you the same way the woman cared for her ten pieces of silver, only much, much more. He is sad when He sees that cross look come into your face, and you go off to the corner. The lost piece of silver could not run back to the woman, could it? It had to wait to be found, but you can run back yourself, and you always know that you ought to. Sometimes you feel ashamed after you have been cross, and slowly your mouth goes down in the middle, and up at the corners, and you run back to the children and say, "I am sorry," and ask them to let you play with them again. That is like being found again after you have been lost, and although the children may be glad to have you back no one is as happy about it as Jesus. He said, "There is joy in the presence of angels over one person who has done wrong and is sorry."

XL

The Lost Son

Luke 15 : 11–32

ONCE there was a man who had two sons. One of them was glad to stay at home, to do his work during the day and to sit with his father in the evening. But the other, the younger one, was restless. He was tired of working in the field with his brother, and of sitting quietly at home in the evening with his family. He wanted to go out into the world and have a good time.

He asked his father to give him the money he would have when his father was dead, so that he could go on a journey and see things. His father gave it to him and, after kissing him good-bye, stood at the door of the home and watched him go.

The young man was happy that morning; he was going off to see the world, and he marched down the road with long swinging steps, his head high, whistling as he went.

His father stood there watching him as he grew smaller and smaller, until he was only a speck in the distance—then he was gone.

Every morning and every evening, I think, the father stood there in the doorway of his home, watching for his son to come back. He stood with his hand shading his eyes, watching for that speck he had seen vanish. But it did not come, and the father's heart grew sad and lonely, waiting for his son.

What do you think the young man was doing? Having a good time spending his father's money? Yes, he did have a good time at first. He travelled on until he came to a far country. There he made lots of friends, for when the people saw how much money he had they all came around him and helped him to spend it. He lived a wild life, until one day he had no money left, not a penny with which to buy a piece of bread. Then the friends left him. They were only make-believe friends, who were nice to him because they wanted to come to his parties. Real friends never leave us when we are poor or in trouble.

So there the son was in a far country, with

no money, and to make things worse, a famine came in the land. You remember what a famine is. I told you of one in the story about Joseph and the other sons of Jacob. This son, too, was hungry and could get no food. Then he went out looking for work, and all he could find was a place with a man who wanted some one to take care of his pigs. Every morning he took the pigs out into the fields, where there were dry pods for them to eat, which fell from the trees. But there was nothing for him. The make-believe friends he had given so much to would not look at him now that he was poor and in want.

The poor fellow watched the pigs gobbling the dry pods and wanted to eat them too, he was so hungry. "My father's servants," he thought, "have enough bread to spare, while I am dying of hunger." He was ashamed, too, and lonely, and that is worse than being hungry. He was ashamed of having spent so foolishly the money his father gave him, and he was lonesome for his father. Then a thought came to him. "I will arise," he said, "and go to my father,

and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy servants.'"

So he started off towards his home. He had been too bad and foolish, he thought, for his father to take him back and treat him as his son, but perhaps he would give him a servant's place in the house.

Do you remember how happily and proudly he had marched along when he started out on his journey? You would not have known him for the same person as he walked slowly and sadly along the road on his way home. He looked like a tramp, his clothes were ragged and faded, he was barefooted and his head was hanging. He did not whistle any more, for he was hungry and unhappy.

But some one was watching for him. Who had stood at the house door every day since he went away, looking anxiously down the road? Yes, it was his father. He stood there now, shading his eyes to see as far as he could. At last he saw a black speck against the sky, then the figure of a young

man. But what a ragged and weary figure! Do you suppose the father knew who it was? And when he did know do you think he said: "I am ashamed of that ragged son who left home and spent my money; I will go in and shut my door upon him"? Oh, no, he did not say that, he thought of nothing except how glad he was to see his dear son again.

While he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. "Father," said the son, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He could not say any more, for his father stopped him.

Then the father called his servants and said: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it. For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

So together they went into the house and in great love and joy sat down to the feast.

XLI

The Light of the World

John 8 : 12

THERE was once a wonderful, great church. Outside of it was a square yard called a court, and leading up to the court was a flight of marble steps. In the court stood two gigantic, gold lamps, one on each side of the stairway. Every year, for a few nights only, these lamps were lighted. They stood so high and the lamps themselves were so powerful, that their light was shed far off over the whole city and the hills beyond. When the people saw that bright light shine forth they all came to the church, and, standing on the steps, sang happy songs, while some of them danced around the lamps for joy.

One night a man with a beautiful, bright face stood beside the lamps before they were lighted. Suddenly the light shone out and a great murmur of pleasure ran over the

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

crowd. Then the man held up his hand and they all kept quiet to hear him. "I am the Light of the World," He said. Do you know who he was? It was Jesus. "I am the Light of the World." Jesus meant that as those lamps lighted every part of the great city, so He was a light to the whole world, making it beautiful and happy. Then, while the crowd stood on the steps and around the lamps, all quiet, listening to every word He spoke, He told them a wonderful thing. He said that every one of them could be a light too; if they followed Him they should have the light of life and their lives would shine like His. He said: "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

I am going to tell you of how Jesus gave His light to one home that was dark and dreary. On the next page is a picture of Him. Tell me what you see there.

Do you see the little stars shining through the branches of the trees? What do you see that is brighter than the stars? The lantern in Jesus' hand. But brightest and most wonderful of all is the light in His face. What

is He doing with His other hand? Knocking upon the closed door. Inside the house there may be an old, blind grandfather. He has to sit in the dark all the time, but that is not as bad as the darkness in his heart. He is so miserable and forlorn that he never smiles; all day he sits and sighs. His daughter is there too, and her children are beside her. One of them is lying on the bed moaning with pain, the others are fighting and crying, and the mother is scolding. The whole house is dark—they do not know where the lamp is, and they are all so unhappy that they do not care whether there is any light.

But who is standing outside the door knocking? The Lord Jesus. Around His feet are sweet flowers, the stars shine brightly over His head, and all about Him are light and peace. He wants to take them into that dark, unhappy house, but the people inside are so busy crying and scolding and fighting that they do not hear the knock.

I will tell you what I think happened. I think the smallest child, who was just learning to walk, heard the knock, and tod-

dling to the door, pulled it open. Then the light streamed in and the family grew quiet, watching it. Jesus put His lantern on the table and went to the bed where the sick child lay. She had stopped crying, and her eyes were fastened on the beautiful, loving face bending over her. When He took her hand, the pain all left her, and a smile of happiness came into her face. Then Jesus turned to the old grandfather. He put His hand on the blind eyes, and when the old man opened them he could see. He saw the lantern and his grandchildren, and he saw the wonderful face of Jesus. Then light came into his dark, sad heart, and he cried for joy.

The children had stopped fighting now and were gathered about Jesus. He put His arms around them and talked to them. The room was peaceful and bright and cozy, and all of them, mother, old grandfather and children, were smiling with happiness. Jesus had brought them His light, the Light of life. I think He told them what He told the people outside of the church; that if they followed Him they would not be in the dark

any more—they would always have light and joy in their hearts. Even the baby could be a bright, little candle.

That is as true to-day as it was then. Jesus comes and knocks at our door. If we open it to Him He brings light and peace into our homes.

XLII

"Follow Me"

Matt. 4 : 18–22

ONE day Jesus was walking on the beach beside the sea. The sun sparkled upon the blue water, the waves broke at His feet, and the fresh breeze blew upon His face.

Pushed out a little from the shore was a rowboat, with two men in it. They were fishermen, called Peter and Andrew, and they were casting a net into the sea. They threw it over the side of the boat and then drew it slowly in, filled with shining fish. Jesus stopped and watched them. Soon they looked up and saw Him. They had known Him before. They knew He was Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth, who had left His home and His carpenter's bench, and was preaching as He walked through the country. They had heard Him preach too, and knew that He was wonderful,

although how very wonderful He really was they did not understand. When they looked up, Jesus called to them over the water. "Follow Me," He said, "and I will make you fishers of men." He was asking them to leave their work, their homes and their friends, to go with Him. And He had no house to invite them to stay in, not even a comfortable place to sleep in. Do you think they went? The story says, "And they straightway left their nets and followed Him." His face shone with such a light, His words were full of such joy and sweetness, that gladly these fishermen left all that they had to follow Him. Together they walked on over the beach until they came to another boat. Two young men were sitting in it with their father. They too were fishermen, and were mending their nets. Jesus stopped and called them. "Follow Me," He said, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Over the country they went with their Master, Jesus, listening to His preaching, watching Him heal sick people, and learning a little how truly wonderful He was. One

day they came to a wide road, called the way of the sea. It cost a good deal to keep that road hard and smooth, so a man was placed beside it to collect money from all who travelled that way, to pay for having it mended. The man's name was Matthew. He was quite a rich man, having a large house of his own, but nobody liked him, or wanted to have anything to do with him, because it was thought that collecting taxes was a disgraceful thing to do. He sat in a little office, beside a gate, and one day Jesus stood there to preach to the crowd who came around Him. When He had finished talking He turned and looked at Matthew. He knew that Matthew was hated by nearly every one, but, in spite of that, Jesus knew, as soon as He looked at him, that he was strong and steady and honest, the kind of man He wanted to follow Him. So He spoke to Matthew. "Follow Me," He said. And Matthew stood straight up and went out, leaving his big house and his money, and followed Jesus.

Another day as Jesus was walking along a road with these disciples, that is, the men

who had followed Him, a young man came running after Him. "Master," he said, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

Jesus wanted that young man to know that if he chose to come with Him, He could not give him a home or much food or any comforts. Even the little foxes and birds have homes, but He had none. I think the young man went with Him, though, don't you? For he had seen the look of love on Jesus' face, he had heard His words of power, and he knew that to be near Him would give a hundred times more happiness than to live in a palace.

Don't you wish we could follow Jesus? Think how beautiful it would be to be always by His side! When we were cross or unhappy we could just look up into His glorious face and everything would be bright.

And we can follow Him to-day just as truly as Peter did, or Andrew, or Matthew. Can you tell me how?

XLIII

The Offering of a Little Lad

John 6: 1–14

ONCE, in a small white house beside a blue lake, there lived a little boy and his mother. The mother did not have a husband to work for her, or any big boys and girls; she had only the one little lad, and they were very poor. But he helped all that he could, cutting wood for the fire, cleaning the house, and catching fish in the blue lake. Every day he started out as soon as the work of the house was done, and fished until dark. Sometimes he had to walk far from home, along the lake, before he caught anything, so his mother used to give him his lunch to take with him. Little loaves of bread made by her out of barley flour were what he usually carried.

As the little lad sat on the edge of the lake, or wandered along the shore, fishing, he sometimes dreamed of what he would do

when he was a man. Would he sail across the lake, and climb the high mountains around it, and go into the great world? He would like to do that, he thought. It would be fine to live in a big city and be a famous man! But other days he looked at the blue waves dancing at his feet and wished he could stay there always and be a fisherman with a boat of his own and many fish-nets. He had a friend, Andrew, who was a fisherman. He had taught the lad how to bait his hook and how to throw his line. Some days the boy thought that it would be splendid to grow up into a strong, good fisherman like Andrew.

One evening Andrew came to the small white house, where the little lad and his mother lived, to say good-bye. He told them of a wonderful Man he had seen, who had stopped and spoken to him while he was fishing, and asked him to leave his nets and follow Him. We have had that story. Do you remember it? Who asked Andrew to leave his home and friends and go with Him? Andrew told the little lad and his mother so much about Jesus, about His beautiful

face and voice, His preaching, His kindness to people who were sick and sad, that the mother and son could think or talk of nothing else during the days after Andrew left them. Now, more than ever, the boy longed to be like Andrew, not only a strong fisherman, but a follower of Jesus. When he wandered along the lake fishing, he dreamed, not of climbing the mountains and seeing the world, but of seeing Jesus, and becoming His follower.

One afternoon the little lad had walked far from home. He had caught only two small fishes, and tired and disappointed he cooked them over a little fire, and sat down beside the lake to eat his lunch. Just as he was beginning his meal, he noticed a great crowd of people in the distance. Hurriedly putting the barley loaves back into his pocket and picking up the forked stick on which hung the fish, he ran towards the crowd to see what was happening. He was so little that he slipped in among the people and soon found himself in the front of the crowd. There to his surprise he saw Andrew and —whom do you suppose? It was Jesus.

Around Him on the hillside were gathered hundreds and hundreds of people who had been sick or unhappy, and who had followed Him out to this quiet spot, sure that He could heal and comfort them. He had healed the sick and then He had told them all such beautiful, happy things that they forgot everything else in listening to the sound of His wonderful voice.

When the little lad reached the crowd the afternoon had passed and the sun was sinking behind the hills. Soon it would be dark—the men, and women, and children would be far from home without any food, and in that quiet spot there was no place to buy anything. Just as the boy reached the front of the crowd he heard Jesus ask one of His disciples where they could get food for all these hungry people. The little lad's heart began to beat hard with excitement. Perhaps Jesus would take his two small fish and his barley loaves! Oh, how happy he would be! Very shyly he crept up to Andrew, and showing him his little store of food told him of his longing to give it to the Master. To please the boy, Andrew spoke

to Jesus. "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes," he said, "but what are they among so many?" Jesus answered, "Make all the people sit down."

Then, while the crowd sat down in rows on the green grass, looking like a flower garden in their brightly coloured clothes, Jesus turned to the lad. Stooping, He took from the boy's hands the five loaves and the two fishes. It was the happiest moment of the little fellow's life. He had dreamed one day of seeing Jesus, of hearing Him speak, of becoming His follower when he was a man, but now, when he was only a little boy, Jesus was speaking to him, smiling upon him, taking his offering. Suddenly the lad understood that he did not have to wait until he was grown up to be a follower of Jesus, and when he gave Him his loaves and fishes he felt as if he was giving Him at the same time his heart and life forever.

When all the people were seated and quiet, Jesus looked up to heaven and gave thanks. Then He broke the bread and the fish and gave them to Andrew and the other

disciples, and they gave the food to the people until they had eaten all they wanted. The boy looked on in wonder. His two tiny fishes and lunch of bread were enough now to feed this great crowd, and there was besides much left over. The disciples gathered up the pieces that were left, and they filled twelve baskets.

As night fell and the stars began to shine, the crowd scattered, and the boy ran home along the lake. He was so happy that as he ran he sang for joy. His dream had come true that day. He had become a follower of Jesus. He did not have to leave his home and mother, Jesus had not asked him to do that. He could follow Him every day by trying to be like Him, by helping and loving, and sometimes by feeding the people he met.

Can we do that too? What can we do to-day that is being like Jesus?

XLIV

The Stilling of a Storm

Matt. 14: 23–32

WE have a wonderful story to hear now about a storm at sea. It happened many years ago when Jesus was living in Palestine.

Late one afternoon He stood by the seashore, surrounded by a crowd of people, men and women, boys and girls, whom He had been healing and comforting and cheering. He had been feeding them, too, with five barley loaves and two small fishes. Do you remember the story of a little lad's offering?

After Jesus had helped all those people He was tired. So He told His disciples to take their little boat and sail to the other side of the sea, and He sent the crowd of people away. When He was all alone and the sun was setting over the water, what do you suppose He did? When we are tired

we want to lie down and go to sleep. But when Jesus was tired He almost always went off alone into the country and prayed to God. That rested Him more than going to sleep. So this evening He climbed a mountain by the seashore, and there, with the stars shining over His head, He prayed to His Father in heaven.

While Jesus was on the mountain top what were His disciples doing? Sailing without Him across the sea. The wind was against them, the waves were high and rough, and they were having a hard time. Some of them were great, strong men who had rowed all their lives. But in spite of that they were almost worn out, and though they had rowed nearly all night, they were not more than half-way across the little sea. But some one was watching them. On the mountain alone stood Jesus. He had seen the storm come up, the great dark clouds, the howling wind, and the waves, high and black, crested with foam. As the moonlight struggled through a break in the clouds He saw the little boat tossing beneath Him on the great waves Then, when it seemed to the disciples they

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could row no further, they saw a light in the darkness, and a bright figure came towards them walking on the water. At first they were frightened; they did not know who or what it could be, but out of the darkness and above the noise of the wind and the waves they heard the beloved voice of their Master. "Be of good cheer," He said; "it is I, be not afraid."

At once Peter, one of the fishermen disciples, you know, wanted to go right to Jesus; he could not wait for Him to come to them. "Lord," he said, "if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." So Jesus said: "Come," and over the side of the boat Peter sprang, and walked towards Him. While his eyes were fixed on his Master's face he was safe. The wind might toss his hair, the spray wet his clothes, but all was well. But when, becoming afraid, he glanced from Jesus to the high, fierce waves and the blackness underneath them, he began to sink, and cried in despair: "Lord, save me." At once, with a smile of pity, Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him. "O thou of little faith," He said, "wherefore

didst thou doubt?" Together they climbed into the boat, and then the wind stopped howling about them, the waves grew small and quiet, and above their heads shone the bright moon. The disciples fell upon their knees and worshipped Jesus. "Of a truth," they said, "Thou art the Son of God."

The next time we are frightened about anything, about being alone in the dark or being out in a storm or anything else, let us remember this story. For Jesus comes to us as He came to His disciples that night. He says to us as He said to them, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid."

Let us say it now.

XLV

The Good Neighbour

Luke 10 : 25–37

I AM going to tell you a beautiful story about neighbours, which Jesus told.

There was a long stony road running from the city of Jerusalem to the city of Jericho. On either side of the road there were mountains with great rocks on them, and behind the rocks there were often robbers hiding. The robbers would wait until some traveller came along the road, then they would spring out, throw the traveller down and rob him. The road was called the Red Road, because so many poor travellers had been thrown down, robbed and left bleeding there.

One day a man was walking along that lonely road. He was not having a very good time; every now and then he stopped to listen, or to make sure he had not seen something move behind a rock. And indeed

he had reason to be afraid, for when he had reached the darkest, loneliest part of the way, some robbers sprang upon him. They tore his clothes from him and beat him, leaving him half dead upon the road. He lay there, cold and suffering and miserable, but suddenly a light came into his face and he opened his eyes. He had heard something, not the swift feet of the robbers, but the slow footsteps of a traveller walking along the same side of the road that he was lying on.

"Surely he will help me," thought the wounded man. The traveller came nearer; he was a priest from the golden temple, the great church, in Jerusalem. He wore flowing, white garments embroidered in colours, and a high pointed cap on his head. He saw the poor, bleeding man lying in front of him, and what do you suppose he did? It seems too dreadful to be true, but he crossed right over to the other side of the road and went on. The poor man closed his eyes again; he was getting very weak and thought he must die there alone in that dismal place. But just as he thought that, he heard another step. It was quicker

this time and on the other side of the road from where he lay, but no one could help seeing him across that narrow way, and surely nobody else could be as cruel as the priest had been. This one was a singer; he sang sweet hymns in the same golden temple that the priest came from. When he saw the bleeding, naked man lying there he stopped at once. Then he crossed the road and looked down upon him.

The poor man was too weak to speak, but he must have looked up at the singer, sure that here at last was a friend. Then the singer—this is almost too terrible to believe —the singer, after having stopped and looked at that wretched man, crossed back to the other side of the road and went on to Jericho.

Then the man had no more hope; it was growing dark and cold, and he was so miserable that he did not hear fresh footsteps, which were coming towards him. He did not even open his eyes when the third man stopped, crossed the road and bent over him. This third man came from another part of the country and was called a Samaritan. The priests and singers did not like the Samari-

tans; they looked down upon them, and would not speak to them when they met. But in God's sight this Samaritan was a hundred times better than they were. For he did not leave that poor man. The first thing the sufferer knew soothing oil and wine were being poured into his wounds, they were bound up with soft cloths, and a warm cloak was wrapped about him. Then he was tenderly lifted and set upon a horse's back, and when he opened his eyes, the Samaritan was walking alongside, leading the horse, and cheering the rider with comforting words.

Soon they reached an inn, a little hotel, and there the Samaritan took a room, and put the sick man to bed, and took care of him all night long. When morning came the Samaritan had to go on his way, but first he called the landlord, the man who owned the inn. The wounded man had no money, you know, the robbers had taken it all and his clothes besides, but the Samaritan gave some of his money to the landlord. "Take care of this man," he said, "and whatever more you spend for him I will pay you when I come again."

Which of the three men who travelled that Red Road was a good neighbour to the man who fell among robbers? Of course, it was the Samaritan.

Let us all, like him, try to help our neighbours.

XLVI

The Last Supper

John 13: 1–17; Luke 22: 14–27

NOT long before Jesus went back to heaven, He and His twelve disciples sat down to supper. It was a very important supper, because it was a feast day in that country, just as Christmas and New Year's Day are feast days here. And then it was the last time that they were all to be together. The room where the table was laid was at the top of the house, a house which belonged to a friend of Jesus, and which had been lent Him for this special supper.

There was not much furniture in the room. There were clean white mats on the floor, and little low tables where the food was spread. Around the tables were sofas, for in that country people half lay down when they ate. At the door of the room was a high stone pitcher filled with fresh water. What do you suppose that was for? What do you wash before you sit down at table? Your hands,

and sometimes your face. But in those days people used to wash their feet when they came into the house; they did not wear any stockings, and the shoes were only soles with straps of leather to keep them on the feet. Those shoes got very dusty, and the feet of the people did too; so before they went into a room they took off their shoes and left them at the door. Then in many houses there were servants, slaves they were called, to wash people's feet. That not only took off the dust and made the feet feel clean and fresh, but it rested the people, too.

To whom did I tell you the house belonged where Jesus had the supper? To a friend, and it was a long walk to this house in the city from the place in the country where Jesus had been staying. The road was rough and hot, and when they reached the upper room they were tired and their feet were sore and dusty. The pitcher of cool, fresh water stood at the door, but there was no servant to wash their feet as they took off their shoes. The disciples were too proud to offer to do work like that for themselves or for each other.

They stood around the table and each one wanted a seat of honour next to Jesus, who sat at the head of the table. They began quarrelling about it. One said he was the oldest and ought to sit there; another said he had followed Jesus longer than the others, so that he was the most important, and one of the seats belonged to him. And each of the others had a different reason for thinking that he was the greatest among them. Then Jesus did a wonderful thing. He was their Lord and Master, you know. He was not only the greatest man in that country, He was the greatest man in the whole world, greater and more wonderful than any man who had ever lived. But, while His disciples were quarrelling about which one of them was the greatest, He took off His cloak and tied a towel around His waist. Then He went to the stone pitcher in the corner of the room, and poured from it into a basin some of the cool, clear water. His disciples had sat down quietly by that time, wondering what their Lord could mean to do. He knelt down before one after another of them and washed their feet, drying them with the towel around His waist. It

was the work of a servant, work which none of them would have done, and yet their Lord was doing it.

How ashamed they must have felt, they who had been quarrelling about who was the greatest, and who should have the seat of honour. They were too ashamed to speak. When Jesus had finished washing all their feet He took His cloak again and sat down at the head of the table.

"Do you know what I have done?" He said. "You call Me your Lord and Master, and you say truly, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. Let him who would be the greatest among you act as a servant to the others."

I do not believe they ever forgot that lesson. I think that every time they began to feel proud and to look for the best seats, they remembered that the greatest King the world had ever known took the part of a servant and washed their feet; and then I am sure they looked around to see what kind and loving service they could do for some one else.

That was the last supper Jesus ever ate with His disciples. Before it began Jesus asked a blessing, then He broke the bread and gave it to them. After that He poured the wine into the cup and passed that to them, telling them to think of Him as often as they did it afterwards. He told them that He would soon be taken away from them, but they must not be sad, for He would never really leave them. Although they could not see Him He would be nearer them than He had ever been before. Then they all sang a hymn and went out in the starlit night to a beautiful garden. What happened in that garden I will tell you about next time.

XLVII

The Story of Easter

Luke 23: 33, 34, 50 to end; 24: 1–9; John 19: 25–27; 20: 1–18

WHO is the best person you know? There was one man who was better and more wonderful than any one we have ever seen.

What did Jesus spend His life doing? Making sick people well, bad people good, sad people happy. Do you suppose that everybody loved Him? No, there were some very wicked people who were afraid of Jesus. He was so good, and they were so bad, that they feared and hated Him. They tried to take Him prisoner, and He knew they were hunting for Him. He could have gone away to another country, and have been safe; but He would not leave the people He was working for, and He was afraid of nothing that any one could do to Him.

They did take Him prisoner. The night in the garden that I spoke of in our last story, they took Him. They did many cruel things to Him, and at last they led Him up a steep road to a green hill. At the top of that green hill they put a cross, and to that cross they nailed Jesus. Do you suppose He was frightened, or that He cried out, or begged them to let Him go? No indeed, Jesus was never afraid of any suffering for Himself. He prayed God to forgive the men who were nailing Him to the cross, He spoke comforting words to His mother, and to His disciples.

On that cross He died.

Sometimes a little brother or sister in your house dies. That only means that the beautiful angel spirit, which is in each one of us, has left this body, and flown up to God in heaven. It is hard for us to lose those we love, but it makes them very happy to fly away.

We know that this is true, because after Jesus had died on the cross, after His body had been laid in a cave, His angel spirit came back, to show us that if we are God's

children death is nothing to be afraid of. That is the reason we sing happy carols at Easter, and make our school bright with flowers. That is the day the spirit of Jesus came back, to tell His dear friends that they must not be sad because He had died.

I am going to tell you the story of the first Easter morning. It is so beautiful, so happy a story.

All the friends of Jesus were very sad, after they had seen their beloved Master die on the cross. They took His body, and lovingly wrapped linen cloths about it, and laid it in a cave in a garden. In front of the cave a great rock was rolled, and around the rock stood soldiers, sent by the wicked men who had killed Jesus, because they did not want His friends to take His body away.

All that night the soldiers stood there, and all the next day. The second night they were still watching, but just as it was beginning to get a little light, there was a noise and a shaking of the ground as a beautiful angel came down from heaven, and rolled the huge rock back from the cave. His face was bright as lightning and his garments were

white as snow. The soldiers shook with fear and ran away.

As they ran out of one gate in the garden, some women were coming in at another gate, walking slowly and sorrowfully. They were friends of Jesus and were bringing fresh linen and sweet spices, to put around His body. As they walked they talked in low, sad voices. Jesus had died; they would never see Him again, they thought, and their hearts were filled with grief. They were wondering how they could roll the great stone away from the cave, to reach the dead body of their Master.

It was still early morning, and there was a faint streak of light in the sky, though the garden was still in darkness. But what was that bright shining light in front of the cave? The women hurried forward, and what did they see? The great rock had been rolled away, and by it stood a wondrous angel. The cave was empty, and the women were frightened; they could not understand what had happened. But the angel said, "Be not afraid, ye seek Jesus, who hung upon the cross. He is not here, He is risen. Go your

THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB

way; tell His disciples that He goeth before you, and ye shall see Him as He said unto you."

Oh, how happy those women must have been! Hurrying back they told the disciples that the Lord was alive; but the disciples could not believe that such wonderful news was true.

Another friend of Jesus came to that garden. Her name was Mary, and she had loved Jesus with all her heart, for He had been very good to her, making her life, which had been black and bad, sweet and good. She came to the cave alone; the rock was rolled back, and stooping down she looked in. The body of Jesus had gone, and the angels in white were sitting there, one at the head, and one at the foot of the place where the body had lain. They were beautiful, but her heart was so full of sorrow that she hardly noticed them.

"Woman, why weepest thou?" they said. And she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Then she turned back, and saw a man

standing near her in the garden. Her eyes were so full of tears that she could not see Him plainly, and she supposed that He was the gardener. He asked her the same question the angels had: "Why weepest thou?"

She answered, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him."

Then the man said, in a voice she knew and loved more than any voice on earth, "Mary!"

Who do you think it was?

It was Jesus, and when she heard His voice she turned, and knelt at His feet, crying with great joy, "Master."

So Jesus came to all His disciples, one by one, or two or three together. And at last they all knew that He was really risen from the dead—that He was alive. And they learnt too what we must learn and never forget; that as Jesus rose from the dead, so we, and all whom we love, rise also. Sometimes when we go to sleep at night, it is dark and stormy, and we feel tired and a little lonesome, but when we wake in the morning the sky is blue, the sun is shining, and we sing for happiness.

Dying is like that; falling to sleep here when we are tired, and waking in heaven with Jesus.

That is why Jesus came back that bright Easter morning after He had died on the cross; to show us that death is nothing to be afraid of, for it means going to be with Him.

XLVIII

Jesus' Last Message

John 21 : 1–17 ; Matt. 28 : 19, 20 ; Luke 24 : 50 to end

THIS is the last story that we have about Jesus before He went back to heaven. After He had died on the cross, He came back in a heavenly body, and when His disciples first saw Him they did not know Him. It was not until He talked to them, or ate with them, or spoke their names in the same dear voice that they knew He was their Master.

One evening the disciples were gathered together on the seashore. Their money was all gone, and Peter said: "I am going fishing." He meant to catch enough fish to sell, so that they could buy food. The others said: "We will go with you." So they hoisted the sail in one of their boats, and sailed off a little way from the shore. All night long they worked, throwing the net far over the side of the boat and drawing

it in slowly, but they did not catch anything, not a single fish. In the early morning they saw a stranger standing on the shore, in the misty light. He called, asking them if they had caught anything, and they answered sadly, "No." Then the stranger called, "Cast your net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find." So over the right side they threw the net. Lower and lower it sank, and, when they tried to draw it in, it was so full of fishes they could not lift it into the boat.

At once they remembered other times in their lives, during the three years they had lived with Jesus, when He had taken care of them; and one of the fishermen, John, whispered to Peter: "It is the Lord."

Then Peter could not wait to row to the shore. He fastened his fisherman's cloak around him, and jumping into the sea he swam to the shore, and threw himself at Jesus' feet.

The others followed slowly in the boat, for they were dragging the heavy net, full of fish. When they reached the beach they saw a little fire burning there, with some fish broil-

ing over it, and some bread lying near it. Beside it stood the figure of one whom they knew was their Master, but because of His shining garments and the heavenly look upon His face, they were shy and quiet before Him. He told them to bring some of the fish they had just caught to add to those on the fire. So Peter sprang forward, and with his strong arm drew in the heavy net. There were one hundred and fifty-three fishes in it, a great many for a net made of light cord, but it was not broken.

Jesus said to them, "Come and breakfast." And none of them dared ask, "Who art thou?" for each knew in his heart it was the Lord. Then Jesus took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish also. After they had breakfasted there on the beach, in the morning light, with the blue waves rolling in at their feet, Jesus talked to them. He told them what He wanted them to do, after He had left them. He had loved them, and taken care of them, feeding them when they were hungry, cheering them when they were sad. Now He wanted them to love other people, to feed them and take care of them.

Sometimes people, even grown up people, get hungry and lonely and lost, just as little lambs and sheep do. Jesus wanted His disciples to take care of those people, so He said:

"Feed My lambs, feed My sheep."

Once more Jesus came to His friends. He walked with them to a mountain top, and there again He told them the same thing; to love and be kind to everybody, and to go through all the world, telling people about Him and His love for them. He told them He would be with them always, even unto the end of the world.

Then He lifted His hands and blessed them; and as He blessed them He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

They fell upon their knees, and worshipped Him, and then with great joy they went back to do the work He had given them.

Why were they joyful? Jesus had left them and they knew they would not see Him again on the seashore, nor in the garden, nor on the mountain. So why were they happy? What had He promised?

That He would be with them always. They knew it was true, and it is true for us too. We cannot see Jesus, but He is nearer us than even our mothers or our fathers. He is with us, loving us and taking care of us, day and night; and He asks us, as He asked His disciples, to love and take care of other people.

Suggestions for Sunday-school Teachers

IN arranging a course of Bible stories for very little children, there is always the question of what method to employ. We know that these children have no idea of time, so that it would be useless to arrange the stories chronologically. We may choose certain topics, such as loyalty, obedience and the like, and group together stories which teach those lessons; but many of the best stories teach no definite lesson except the fact that God is always near us; that is the lesson with which the Old Testament stories are saturated. In order to select what will appeal most strongly to very young children, we must, therefore, make the list without regard to the lessons taught, or to the times in which the events occurred, but choose the stories for their beauty of form, and simplicity of narrative, and trust to the spirit which inspired the writers to instruct and thrill our children.

The stories must be told over and over again to be really appreciated; although this may not be as interesting to the teacher as to take a new course of lessons every year. All who have told stories to children realize that they love best a story they know so well that they can prompt the teller if the wrong words are used, or a single incident is omitted.

The stories in this book have been arranged for the Sundays of one year. See "Arrangement by Months" on page 243.

Some grouping of the stories had to be made so that the teachers might have a clue to the order in which they were to be told; and the best plan seemed to be to group them about a picture, although in some cases the connection is very slight. Sunday-school pictures cost a great deal if they are good, and are soon thrown away if they are poor. In our Sunday-school the plan of giving one good picture to every child each month, and, merely to improve the attendance, a very small one each Sunday, has worked admirably. A large copy of the month's picture hangs on the wall of the Sunday-school room during that month, and at the end of that time, a Perry, or Wilde, or Tissot picture is given to each child, mounted on gray cardboard, with a ribbon through the eyelets by which to hang it. Into many dark, rear-house bedrooms these pictures have found their way, and are hung so that the child can see them from his bed; others ornament the kitchen or best room, and as friends of the parents come in they are led about the room, and the story of each picture is sometimes recited in turn by babies hardly old enough to walk to Sunday-school.

The Bible texts are chosen on the same principle, for if these tiny children learn a new text each Sunday they forget it rapidly; but if the same text is recited every Sunday for a month, they remember and repeat it at home, and if the same one is used the following year, it becomes engraven on their memories.

At our Sunday-school, the Beginners' Department, with a membership of 160 children under eight years of age, meets together for the opening and closing exercises, but is divided into small circles of not more than ten each for the study of the lesson, according to

the kindergarten principle. The general exercises are constantly varied to maintain the interest of the children, but the same hymns, prayers, and verses are often repeated so that they are thoroughly memorized. After the opening exercises the classes separate into different rooms, where the teacher of each class tells the story and then calls upon the children to repeat it, or to draw objects in it, or best of all, to act it. The classes are taught by the older girls of the Sunday-school, who meet once a week to practice story-telling, and it is due to their unfailing enthusiasm and devotion to the children that the plan has worked out so well.

Nearly all the stories in this book have been written for the same set of children, and although they have been told to them almost word for word, as given here, it is realized that every teacher or mother using them will have to adapt them to her own circle of listeners. These are merely given as examples.

In every instance the writer has tried to begin the story with some subject familiar to the children. It is not, however, always necessary to commence by reference to every-day occurrences. In some cases it is a good plan and some of these stories do open that way. For example:

Before telling the story of Joshua it is asked, "Who would like to be a soldier? Show me how a soldier stands; how he salutes; how he holds his gun when marching and firing. There was a splendid soldier once named Joshua, etc." But if the narrative itself begins about something easily understood, the attention of the children is caught without the questioning preamble, which is chiefly valuable for quieting a restless class.

Having secured their attention by the opening and held it during the story, how often have we realized when we finished the moral, that our hearers had lost all interest in what we were saying. Is not this because we place undue importance upon the moral? The story is the root, and the moral or lesson is the beautiful flower blossoming from it. If the root is well planted the flower will surely bloom in time, and we must take care not to kill it by forcing its growth. Many times a child will glean a lesson from our story which is more beautiful than any we could have taught.

I have spoken of reviewing the stories by acting them. The children enjoy that tremendously, and it fixes the story firmly in their minds. We do it in the separate circles and also when the whole class is together. Here is an example of how it is done:

The Good Neighbour is one of the best to act. The two robbers hide behind chairs for rocks and jumping out, knock down (very gently) the traveller on his way across the room to Jericho. The three other travellers come by in turn, two pausing to look and then hastening on; but the third takes the teacher's handkerchief and ties it around the sufferer's arm. He is placed upon another chair, which serves for a donkey, and taken to the inn. While he sits there, with the handkerchief still on his arm, the other children tell of what they can do to be good neighbours, and the teacher counts the list off upon her fingers until both hands are full of suggestions.

Arrangement by Months

JANUARY . . Picture . Expulsion from the Garden of Eden. (Doré)
Text . . Joshua 1 : 9. ("The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.")
Stories . The Garden of Eden. Genesis 1 : 1–5 ; 2 : 4 to end 15
Forbidden Fruit. Genesis 3 . . . 19
Cain and Abel. Genesis 4 : 1–16 . 23
The Flood. Genesis 6, 7, 8 . . . 27

FEBRUARY . Picture . The Boy Jesus in the Carpenter Shop. (La Fout)
Text . . John 13 : 33, 34. ("Little children, love one another ; as I have loved you.")
Stories . The Boyhood of Jesus. Luke 2 : 40, 51, 52 162
Jesus the Carpenter. Mark 6 : 3 ; Luke 4 : 31–41 166
Jesus and a Little Girl. Mark 5 : 21–24, 35 to end 172
Jesus and the Children. Mark 10 : 13–16 177

MARCH . . Picture . Rebekah at the Well. (Doré)
Text . . 1 Samuel 3 : 9. ("Speak, Lord ; for thy servant heareth.")
Stories . The Story of Abraham. Genesis 12 : 1–5 ; 13 ; 14 ; 15 : 1 ; 21 : 1–8 ; Matt. 11 : 1 33
Rebekah at the Well. Genesis 24 . 38
Jacob and the Angels. Genesis 27, 28 44
The Boy Samuel. 1 Samuel 1, 2 : 1–11, 18–21 ; 3 : 1–10 82

APRIL . . . Picture . The Women at the Tomb. (Bougereau)
Text . . Matt. 28 : 20. ("Lo, I am with you alway.")
Stories . The Last Supper. John 13 : 1–17 ; Luke 22 : 14–27 228

		The Story of Easter. Luke 23 : 33, 34, 50 to end; 24 : 1–9; John 19 : 25–27; 20 : 1–18	227
		Jesus' Last Message. John 21 : 1–17; Matt. 28 : 19, 20; Luke 24 : 50 to end	234
		The Good Neighbour. Luke 10 : 25–37	217
MAY	Picture .	Caravan in Egypt. (Decamp)	
	Text . .	Revelation 2 : 10. ("Be thou faithful unto death.")	
	Stories .	Joseph the Dreamer. Genesis 37 : 1–11	48
		Joseph Sold by His Brothers. Genesis 37 : 12 to end	53
		Joseph the Ruler. Genesis 39, 40, 41, 42 : 1–5	56
		Joseph Forgiving His Brothers. Genesis 42, 43, 44, 45, 46; 47 : 1–12	59
JUNE	Picture .	The Good Shepherd. (Plockhorst)	
	Text . .	John 10 : 11.	
	Stories .	The Good Shepherd. John 10 : 1–18	180
		The Lost Sheep. Luke 15 : 3–7 .	184
		The Lost Money. Luke 15 : 8–10 .	188
		The Lost Son. Luke 15 : 11–32 .	193
JULY	Picture .	The Finding of Moses. (Delaroche)	
	Text . .	Psalm 91 : 11. ("He shall give His angels charge over thee.")	
	Stories .	The Baby Boy Moses. Exodus 2 : 1–10	64
		Moses the Leader. Exodus 3; 12 : 34–39; 13 : 20–22	68
		The Red Sea. Exodus 14 : 5 to end; 15 : 1–22	74
		Joshua the Soldier. Joshua 5 : 13 to end; 6 : 1–20	77
AUGUST . .	Picture .	David and the Lion. (Gardner)	
	Text . .	Psalm 23 : 1. ("The Lord is my shepherd.")	
	Stories .	The Story of Ruth. The Book of Ruth	87
		The Shepherd Boy. 1 Samuel 17 : 34–37	91

David and the King. 1 Samuel 16 : 14 to end 95
David and the Giant. 1 Samuel 17 100

SEPTEMBER . Picture . Elijah and the Widow's Son. (Maddox Brown)
Text . . Joshua 1 : 5. ("I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.")
Stories . How God Took Care of Elijah. 1 Kings 17 : 1–7; James 5 : 17, 18 105
The Barrel of Meal and the Cruse of Oil. 1 Kings 17 : 8–16 . . . 111
Elijah and a Little Boy. 1 Kings 17 : 17 to end 115
Fire from Heaven. 1 Kings 18 . 118

OCTOBER . . Picture . The Light of the World. (Holman Hunt)
Text . John 8 : 12. ("I am the light of the world.")
Stories . The Light of the World. John 8 : 12 198
"Follow Me." Matt. 4 : 18–22 . . 203
The Offering of a Little Lad. John 6 : 1–14 207
The Stilling of a Storm. Matt. 14 : 22–33 213

NOVEMBER . Picture . Daniel's Answer to the King. (Reviére)
Text . . Matt. 26 : 41. ("Watch and pray.")
Stories . The Story of Four Boys. Daniel 1 123
The Burning Fiery Furnace. Daniel 3 129
How God Punished a Proud King. Daniel 5 136
Daniel in the Den of Lions. Daniel 6 141

DECEMBER . Picture . The Arrival of the Shepherds. (Larolle)
Text . . Luke 2 : 14.
Stories . The Coming of the King. Luke 1 : 26–38; 46–55 146
The First Christmas. Luke 2 : 1–20 150
The Wise Men. Matt. 2 : 1–12 . . 153
The Story of St. Christopher. Old Legend 157

Order of Service

1. A few quiet measures on the piano to bring class to order, then one loud chord for rising. Stand and sing any spirited hymn.
2. Recite text for the day, or for the month.
3. Two chords. With the first, turn, with the second (a soft broken chord) kneel and sing the following prayer:

(*Tune, St. Sylvester*)

Heavenly Father, we Thy children,
Gather in Thy house to-day;
Loving Saviour, stay Thou near us,
Listen to us as we pray.

Guide our teacher as she leads us,
Hear Thy praises that we sing,
Make us kind to one another,
Bless the pennies that we bring.

Watch Thou also o'er our loved ones
In their sorrows and their joys.
Help us all the weeks before us
To be better girls and boys. Amen.

—W. S. C.

Two chords for rising and seating.

4. Sing "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." (From "Special Songs and Services," by Mrs. Kennedy, published by Wilde & Co.)
5. Short talk by the leader on some subject familiar to the child, which is also connected with the lesson for the day.
6. Rise, and sing an old hymn or learn a verse of a new one.

7. Special Exercises.
   The birthday service if a child has had a birthday during the week. (See page 250.)
   Welcome to a new scholar if there is a new member. (See page 251.)
   Cradle Roll service, if there is a new baby in one of the scholars' families. (See page 252.)
   Promotion service on the Sundays children are promoted into older departments. (See page 253.)
8. Collection and record of attendance during singing of offertory hymn.

If the Infant Department is divided into small classes, each teacher marks her own roll book and takes her class collection in a small bank. The banks are then brought by a member of each class to the leader, and the offertory verse is sung.

(*Tune*, "*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*")

Father to Thy loving kindness,
Never failing us, we owe,
Homes, and friends, and schools, and teachers,
All the pleasures that we know.
So if boys and girls are churchless,
Homeless, friendless anywhere,
Use, O Lord, these gifts we bring Thee
For Thy needy children's care.

—W. S. C.

Offertory Verse for Christmas Time

What shall I give Him, poor as I am,
If I were a shepherd, I'd bring Him a lamb; (arms holding)
If I were a wise man, I would do my part, (kneeling and presenting)
But what shall I give Him? (standing)
Give Him my heart.

—CHRISTINA ROSETTI.

9. Lesson. The small class separates into circles for the teaching of the lesson story and for reproducing it by drawing or acting. Twenty minutes should be allowed.
10. Classes reunite. After all are assembled let them rise with one chord on the piano and sing a hymn.
11. Review of the lesson by the leader.
12. Recite (with appropriate motions).

(*Standing*)

Two hands now let us show,
Two hands held out just so,
Right hand, right things must do,
Left hand must help it too.
Clasp them in prayer each day,
Raise them for good alway,
From mischief hold them tight
Nor let them strike or fight,
But stretch them out in love,
And upwards point above.

(*Seated*)

Now fold them as we pray,
And think of what we say.
With heads all bending low,
And eyes all closed just so.
Repeating, word for word,
The prayer of our dear Lord.

(From "Special Songs and Services," by Mrs. Kennedy, published by Wilde & Co.)

Prayer by leader, ending with the Lord's Prayer, in which the children join.

13. Sing an evening hymn.
14. Rise and sing:

(*Tune*, "*Jesus Loves Me*")
Father, teach us as we go,
What we've learned in deeds to show;
Work or play, whate'er we do,
Make us loving, kind and true.

—W. S. C.

Repeat: "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another."

Sing: "Good-bye to you, good-bye to you, good-bye dear children, good-bye to you."

Also: "Good-bye dear teacher." (From "Song Stories for the Sunday-School," published by Summy & Co.)

Birthday Service

The birthday child should bring an envelope to the leader containing as many pennies as he, or she, is years old; she opens it and the child drops each penny into a bank, while the children count the number of years.

The class recites the following prayer with the teacher:

"We thank Thee, Heavenly Father,
For all the loving care,
That Thou hast given (child's name)
At home and everywhere.
For . . years Thou hast guarded him,
Asleep, at work, at play,
O Father, love and care for him,
On this and every day." Amen.

Sing: "Happy Birthday to You." (Music same as "Good-bye to You.")

Welcoming New Scholars

The leader, or one of the teachers, stands beside the new scholar, facing the class, and sings the first two lines of each verse.

The class respond with the remaining lines.

(*Tune, "Shining Sun" in "The School Hymnal," published by Presbyterian Board of Publication*)

Is there room? Is there room? in your happy throng,
May another find a place, join in prayer and song?
Little child, little child, hear the welcome call.
In our Heavenly Father's house there is room for all.

Little friends, little friends, gathered here to-day,
Tell me of Our Father's Love, how to live His way.
Little child, little child, helpful be and true,
Heart aglow with love and joy, that's His way for you.

—W. S. C.

Cradle Roll Service

Place a small cradle on a table in front of the class. The child nearest of kin to the new baby presents an application card stating its name and age. This is read aloud by the leader and placed in the cradle by the child.

Leader: What did Jesus say about little children?

Class: Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Sing:

(*Tune*, "*Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*")

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Brown, and yellow, black and white,
They are precious in His sight;
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

—Rev. Henry Wilson.

Promotion Service

The children to be promoted stand in a line facing class. The class rises and salutes them in time to chords.

1, stand; 2, hand to forehead; 3, salute; 4, arm down at side; 5, sit down.

The class recites the following verse:

Girls, good-bye! Boys, good-bye! We are sorry you must pass,
From our pleasant company to the older class.
Together we will sing our song, and bow our heads to pray,
We love you and will think of you, God bless you every day.
—Robert Davis.

Sing: "Good-bye to You."

Give a flower to each child promoted and let them march from room into the next department class-room.

(The Order of Service with music has been published by Christ Church Sunday-school and may be obtained from The Fleming H. Revell Company.)

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